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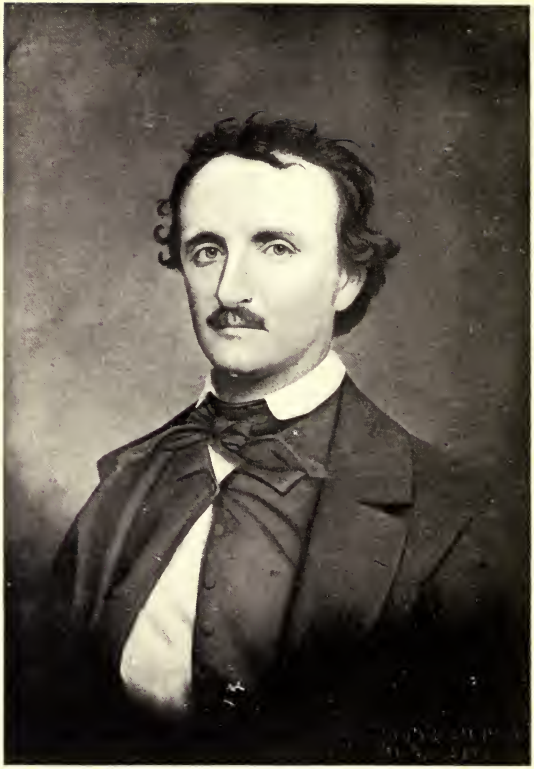

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Edgar A. Poe

EDGAR ALLAN POE

A
CENTENARY TRIBUTE

By

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THE EDGAR ALLAN POE MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

The approach of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the birth of Edgar Allan Poe found the people of Maryland realizing that it should witness their full acknowledgment of his genius.

Among those with whom sentiment had quickened to conviction were the members of The Woman's Literary Club of Baltimore, who first discussed the subject in March, 1904. From the flint and steel of their interchanging thoughts was lit the flame of purpose on April 18, 1907, when The Edgar Allan Poe Memorial Association was incorporated by the board of management of the Woman's Literary Club with the object of "erecting in Baltimore a monument to the poet worthy of his genius."

The Association was brought before the public on April 20, 1907, at a meeting in the club's rooms, 105 West Franklin Street. Its invitations were responded to by the presidents or representatives of the women's clubs and societies of city and state, who accorded enthusiastic concurrence with the movement. The press was most inspiring. To the *Sun's* vital interest too high value cannot be accredited; also to the *Baltimore American* and other journals from seaboard to mountains.

The executive board immediately took up business details, chairmen were appointed through Maryland, and correspondence conducted toward forming branch associations in other states. A number of the clubs and societies whose representatives had pledged their support promptly redeemed their promises. Over two thousand circular letters were issued calling attention to the work, and emphasizing the voluntary nature of the contributions.

The cause widely endorsed, success seemed assured, when conditions were reversed by the financial stringency of June, 1907. Accepting the situation, the executive board resolved to wait until returning prosperity justified resumption of active measures, though untiring workers continued to add to the fund.

The celebration of the Centenary being contemplated alike by Johns Hopkins University and the Association, coöperation with the use of McCoy Hall for the exercises was invited by Dr. Ira Remsen in a cordial letter to the president of the Association. This appropriate suggestion accepted, the programmes were merged into one of great dignity and power, commanding close attention from the brilliant assemblage; the evening of January 19, 1909, marking an epoch in the literary history of Baltimore.

For the speakers gracious permission to here record their tributes the executive board extends warm and appreciative thanks, and also acknowledge the vivid interest lent this volume by the accompanying photographs.

With confidence in ultimate success justified by the

response of the people of Baltimore to the Centenary meeting, this book is sent forth and from every reader of its message is asked personal and abiding interest in the work and purpose of

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(*Edgar Allan Poe*)

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE

Stone calls to stone, and roof to roof;
Dust unto dust;—
Lo, in the midst, starry, aloof—
Like white of April blown by last year's stalks
Across the gust—
A Presence walks.

It is the Shape of Song;
About it throng,
Great Others, and the first is Tears;
The ended years;
And every old and every lonely thing;
Old thirsts that to old hungers cry;
The poignancies of earth and sky;
The little sobbing of the spring.

He heeds them not;
They are forgot;
For him, behind this ancient wall,
The Best of all—
The short day sped;
A roof; a bed;
No years;
No tears.

Not his the strain
Of hill or lane;
Of orchards with their humble country musk,

And bent old trees,
And companies of small black bees;
  Of gardens at the dusk,
Where down the hush,
A thrush
His heartbreak spills;
Of daffodils
By farmhouse doors a windy sight,
A yellow gust driven down the light.

Nor his the note
That trumpeted of war,
  Of ancient creed;
Strange, innocent, remote
  His reed
A wind along the hollows of an echoing shore:
  Each day was but a pool within the grass,
A haunted space,
  Where saw he as in glass,
But Wonder, with her dim, drowned face.

For Wonder was his kin,
His very twin;
Blood of his blood indeed,
And steadfast to his need;—
  The ecstasies of cloud and sky;
The cry out in the dark;
The half lit spark
That lures from earth to star;
The fleeting footsteps far and far;
  The trailing skirts so nigh, so nigh,
These drew he from their ghostly mesh
And made them flesh;
We reach dull hands, for we would know;
They fade; they go;
Yea, he and they together,
Into another weather.

A strange, autumnal verse;
Where griefs their griefs rehearse;
A flaw of rain within the air;
Black pools; the bough gone bare;
And red dead leaves and broken wall;
The flare of tempest driven behind them all.

Yet ever is his music such,
So rapt of touch,
It mellows all the ache,
And the heartbreak;
We cannot weep, but we stand wistful-eyed,
Like children at the eventide,
In some fast darkening spot,
Who hear their mother call, but see her not.

Oh, truest singer east or west!—
  Not for the poor handful of hire,
But for the fury of the song,
  The unescapable desire,
He sang his short life out, and it was best;
His wage was hunger; it was long
Betwixt the days of blame and jeers,
And that which set him with his peers;
  A fragmentary song, yet dear to Art;
Its numbers hold
Enough of music for new world and old,
  To shake them to the heart.

And now, many a summer's weather,
Now, many a winter's storms together,
  The wind; the shower;
The blooms; the snows;
  Have petaled into this brief hour,
And drop upon his dust a rose.

Roof calls to roof and stone to stone;—
Like white of April blown
The gust along—
The Shape of Song!

THE CENTENARY OF POE.

WILLIAM PETERFIELD TRENT, LL.D., D.C.L.

Probably not a few of you traveling in Europe have kept your eyes open for evidences of interest in things American, and perhaps in American literature. If you have, your eyes may have lighted, as mine did not many months ago, on a copy of a French translation of some of Poe's tales, wretchedly printed, in yellow paper covers, adorned with a repelling woodcut of the author. I saw my copy in a small bookshop on the Corso in Rome, and standing next to it was an equally unattractive copy of a French translation of some of Byron's poems. The juxtaposition naturally suggested a certain train of reflections. Poe and Byron, although they number more Continental readers than most of the writers that have used the English tongue, are precisely the two writers of commanding position against whom the harshest criticism has been directed by an influential portion of the public of their respective and respectable countries. That this is true of Byron will be admitted by most persons acquainted with modern British criticism. If you doubt it, you may read the pages devoted to the poet in Professor George Saintsbury's volume on English literature in the nineteenth century, pages which leave one wondering just how eccentric a critic may be without losing his reputation. It

might be difficult to cull from any American critic of equal standing with Professor Saintsbury utterances with regard to Poe quite so extraordinary as those of the British critic with regard to Byron; but it is easy to show that, like Byron, Poe has been subjected to what, in view of his high position abroad, is an astonishing amount of harsh criticism from his own countrymen.

Emerson, for example, is reported to have called the writer whom many Americans consider the greatest author yet produced in this country, "the jingle man." Poe did write *The Bells*, and he managed to put a great deal of their "jingling and tinkling" into his poem, or his metrical *tour de force* if one prefers so to designate it—but he also wrote in his youth those stanzas beginning "Helen, thy beauty is to me" which are as magically harmonious, at least in their opening, as any lines I can recall from any other American poet. This haunting, beautiful poem, to the symmetry of which Lowell paid ungrudging tribute, did not suffice to bear Poe aloft into Emerson's *Parnassus* but the stanzas that compose it have sung themselves a home in thousands of hearts.

Lowell, who has just been cited as a witness for the defense, must also be called by the prosecution. In famous lines, he brought Poe along with his *Raven* like Barnaby Rudge,

> Three-fifths of him genius and two-fifths sheer fudge.

Perhaps your well-to-do citizen, after a prosperous day and a good dinner, might be inclined, with Mr. Burchell of *The Vicar of Wakefiel* to cry out "Fudge, fudge" on hearing some one repeat the stanza:

For, alas! alas! with me
The light of Life is o'er!
No more—no more—no more!—
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar.

But the man with a feeling for highly emotional poetry and an ear for the rhythms in which such poetry should be couched is not likely, I think, to underrate these appealing verses.

Lowell and Emerson represent, however, a former generation, and so does the notorious ballot for the ten best or favorite American books taken a good many years ago by the weekly journal *The Critic*, a ballot in which Poe did not even manage to come in at the foot of the poll. But fully twenty years later I find a modern American critic writing about Poe's "unlimited scholarly ignorance" —whatever that may mean—and it is in this twentieth century that I myself have had to conduct a correspondence with the principal of a school in one of our greatest States who regretted that he could not permit my *History of American Literature* to enter his school library for the reason—not that I had treated Poe too harshly or too favorably—but that I had treated him at all. School children, according to my correspondent, ought not to know that such a life was ever lived.

But this, you may say, is too bizarre an experience to be made the basis of any sort of argument. Perhaps so, but it is not my sole experience of the kind. I have also had to correspond with a teacher on the other side of the

Continent—where to us effete Easterners there seems to be no dearth of the materials for thrilling adventure—on the unwholesome effects upon youthful minds of the excitement created by the perusal of Poe's stories. And—that I may balance a southern experience with these from the North and West—I have had a colleague, a Southerner of great culture and scholarship, whose name would be familiar to many of you, tell me that he had been obliged to decline an invitation to write an essay on Poe because, being a Southerner, he did not wish to undertake the invidious task of showing how badly the author of *The Fall of the House of Usher* usually wrote. And, coming back to the North, only the other day a colleague said to me, with a slight note of glee in his voice, "I've just read Blank's article on Poe in manuscript, it will appear in the — number of ———. I tell you, he just rips Poe up the back." I got my colleague to admit, before we parted, that, when writers of Poe's calibre and standing are ripped up the back by modern critics, two features of the phenomenon may be predicated as fairly constant. One is that the rip nearly always follows the line of a previous rip; the other is that, as a rule, the victim's admirers are unconscious of the fact that any ripping has taken place. I submit, in the light of my reading and my personal experiences that we do not need ballots for *The Critic*, or the Hall of Fame to convince us that, even in this centennial year, Poe's admirers in America have still something of a task before them if they wish, as they must wish, to make his fame in his native land at all commensurate with his achievements, as these are viewed by the world at large.

Yes, there is still much to do, but has not a great deal been accomplished? Not quite sixty years, that is not quite two generations have passed since Poe died under deplorable circumstances here in this city of Baltimore, which, if I may so phrase it, is the center of the mystery which still surrounds his life, and which, in consequence, should be the center of future investigations of his interesting career. When he died in his forty-first year his national reputation was not inconsiderable, though in many respects unfavorable, and, in a small way, the foundations had been laid for his international fame. There were also incipient signs of the formation of a cult. Taking everything into consideration—Poe's antecedents and temperament, his financial status, the comparatively unpropitious environment in which he lived and wrote—we may fairly hold that in his short life he accomplished as editor, critic, story-teller, and poet a rather exceptional amount of work which produced upon his contemporaries much more than an average impression. In other words, Poe is no exception to the rule that the writers who really count began by counting with their contemporaries. We may hold more than this, however. Many a writer has established for himself by the time of his death a greater fame than Poe had secured by 1849, and then has slowly lost it, in whole or in part, without having experienced two great drawbacks such as speedily fell to the lot of Poe. We must remember that it was his fate to be read for many years in an unattractive edition prepared by a somewhat unsympathetic and perfunctory editor, whose name has been anathema to the poet's admirers, but upon whom it is no longer necessary or

even just to pour forth the vials of our wrath. It was also Poe's fate to have that period of detraction which usually follows a writer's death coincide with a period of civil discord and confusion in which literature was bound to suffer and did suffer greatly. After the war was over, the work of material and political reconstruction took its natural precedence. It may therefore be said without exaggeration that thoroughly normal conditions for the spread of a writer's fame have existed in this country only for a space of about thirty years. During these years our sense of nationality has been immensely developed, and we have consequently taken a greater interest and pride in our literature. Poe, with other writers of the past, has naturally profited from these propitious conditions, but here again fate has been somewhat untoward to him. His early biographers and critics tended to become either extravagantly eulogistic or unduly captious, and the weight of authority lay, for some years, with the unduly captious. For obvious reasons, American literature was synonymous to a majority of readers with New England literature, and it would have been little short of a miracle if the admirers and exponents of the latter literature had greatly relished or indeed thoroughly understood the works of a man who had not himself too well comprehended the merits of the literature they loved and represented. Poe's fame, therefore, became too much of a sectional or a partisanly individual matter and too little of a national matter, when all the while, thanks in part to his lack of local, that is of untranslatable flavor, in part to the extraordinarily sympathetic comprehension of Baudelaire, in part to

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literary conditions obtaining in France, it was becoming an international matter.

Shall we pause here to indulge in words of blame or regret? I think not. Poe's attitude toward New England and its writers was almost predetermined, and it has not seriously hurt either. Their attitude toward him has doubtless somewhat retarded the spread of his fame and his influence in America; but it has also stimulated the zeal of his admirers, and it has tested as with fire the gold of his genius. Without such testing would his countrymen be celebrating this centenary of his birth with so much enthusiasm, with so much really national not sectional spontaneity, with so much confidence in the permanent worth of the achievements of the man they commemorate? When I speak of the enthusiasm with which people are celebrating his centenary, I am not, of course, indulging in the delusion that this academic paper I am reading will pass with any of you as a Swinburnian outburst of dithyrambic eulogy. All I am trying to do is to emphasize the widespread and genuine interest this one hundredth anniversary of Poe's birth has aroused throughout the country, and to point out the fact that, as a student of literary history, I see in the phenomenon one of the best proofs that could be furnished of Poe's possession of a great and unique genius. If that genius were as decadent, as meretricious, as paltry, as some critics would have us think it, should we not be obliged to consider a larger number of our fellow-citizens gulled or demented than it would be at all comfortable to believe? If that genius had not added materially to the world's pleasure and profit, is it likely that in sixty years, more than half of

which have just been shown to have been distinctly unpropitious to Poe's fame in America, his works would have been more carefully and fully annotated than those of any other American writer? There is enough interest and pathos and mystery in his biography to account for the study devoted to Poe the man; but I doubt extremely whether the popular and scholarly editions of his works would have increased as they have done within our own generation, to say nothing of such evidence of his fame as the multiplication of critical essays and monographs and the high prices paid for first editions of his books, if, despite his limitations, Poe had not been, besides a waif of fortune, the most unalloyed specimen of that indescribable something called æsthetic genius yet produced in this new world Yes—a great deal has been accomplished in sixty years. It has been made practically certain that Poe's fame is permanent and large and luminous as a star, even if the star still shines out upon us from behind light clouds.

The fact that Poe, despite many limitations and drawbacks, among which we must count the comparatively brief span of his creative activity—he was writing not much more than twenty years—should have gained a position among American authors which in the eyes of most Europeans and of many of his own countrymen is, to say the least, second to none, is probably the most important fact that can be emphasized upon this centennial occasion. It is a cause for congratulation in more senses than one. The triumph of genius over untoward conditions always makes a profound appeal to generous natures. Fame seems to do her most salutary work when

she dresses the balance. And when, dressing the balance, she conquers prejudices, especially those prejudices that divide classes and sections, she does a profoundly moral work. Poe long since exchanged "these voices" for "peace."

> He has outsoared the shadow of our night.
> Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
> And that unrest which men miscall delight,
> Can touch him not, and torture not again.

What are our praise or blame to him? But what are they not to ourselves? He can dispense with editions and monographs, with monuments and portraits and celebrations. We cannot dispense with them because they are needed for the full expression of those sentiments of sympathy and gratitude, of generosity and justice without which we should be unworthy of our heritage of civilization. Yes—the fact that in two generations we as a people have made a not inconsiderable progress toward attaining an adequately sympathetic and just appreciation of the life and works of the poet we are honoring tonight is a fact we can scarcely over-emphasize, a fact for which we can scarcely be too thankful.

If, however, we would be thoroughly just, we must take some account of what the men and women who do not join us in honoring Poe or are grudging in their praise have to say in their own behalf. Why is it that the author of one of the best books we have on our poet told someone that he had to take a trip to Italy in order to get the taste of Poe out of his mouth? A Frenchman got satisfaction from praying to Poe, but although Poe is generally be-

lieved to have been born in Boston and although that city is the home of almost every sect known to man, I have yet to hear of the erection of a Poe shrine in the place of his nativity. What are we to think of this divergence? Shall we merely shrug our shoulders and ejaculate "De gustibus non est disputandum—There is simply no arguing about tastes"? Probably this is the most prudent method of procedure, but it is much more certain that it is the laziest and perhaps the most cowardly, and I somehow do not like to take it.

Perhaps in considering the case against Poe it will be well to revert for a moment to the parallel between him and Byron with which we began. The standing of both poets has been considerably lowered with their respective countrymen, indeed with the entire Anglo-Saxon reading public, by features of their characters and careers which have not greatly counted with Continental readers. We may say, if we choose, that many Englishmen and Americans have judged Byron and Poe by Puritanical standards, or we may say that a sound instinct of moral self-preservation has led the British and the American public to withhold its allegiance, in whole or in part, from men and writers whose examples and whose works scarcely seemed to make for individual or collective righteousness and happiness. Let us comment on the phenomenon as we please, but let us not blink it. Byron and Poe have been and are constantly judged by moral standards, and they have suffered in consequence both as men and as writers. But they have been judged at the same time by literary standards, and here the parallel seems to break down. Criticism adverse to Byron tends to center in the charge

that he had too little art; criticism adverse to Poe tends to center in the charge that he had too much art. The one poet is pronounced to be over-copious, coarse, and slip-shod; the other to be costive, over-refined, decadent. The question at once arises—are English and American readers sincere upholders of what we may call a golden-mean æsthetic standard, or are they rather to be classed in the main as partisan pleaders bent upon making their case as strong as they can? How is it that so many European readers manage to accept both the copious, inartistic Byron and the scrupulous, limited Poe? Is it that they have no standards, moral or æsthetic, or that they have other standards than ours, or that all these questions I am asking are beside the point?

Perhaps the last question touches the root of the matter. Shall we not, all of us, settle down as peaceable impressionists liking what we like and disliking what we dislike, and, in the language of the street, "letting it go at that"? A comfortable suggestion indeed. Acting upon it, we could all exclaim "Glory to Poe" and go home. But again that suspicion of laziness and cowardliness creeps over me. Can we afford "to let it go at that"? I think not.

Suppose for the moment we allow the unfriendly biographers of Poe to have it all their own way. Let us not dispute a single point. What have we left? In my judgment, the most interesting, the most pathetic, and in some ways the most instructive of all American biographies. What we Americans seem always to demand of a biography is that it should be exemplary and inspiring. This the biography of Poe certainly is not, except in so

far as there is true inspiration to be gained from the contemplation of a life so steadily devoted, amid drawbacks and vicissitudes, to the unflinching pursuit of clearly recognized artistic ideals. But, granted that on the side of moral conduct Poe's life is sadly lacking in inspiration, are we such children that we cannot face the unpleasant, the uncanny side of life? Can we afford to confine our sympathies to orthodox and exemplary subjects and occasions? Have we so little motive power in ourselves that we must ever be seeking inspiration from without—especially inspiration of the smug, successful, well-to-do variety? Let us have the exemplary and the inspiring by all means, but let us remember that man does not live by approbation and aspiration alone. On that sort of emotional diet he might soon become cowardly and selfish. Man lives by interest and curiosity, or he grows dull and commonplace; he lives by alert comprehension, or he soon falls a victim to the malevolent forces of life; and, if he does not often, in the words of Gray,

> Ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears,

he speedily becomes an arid and unlovely creature. I repeat that we all need to be brought in contact with the interesting, the pathetic, the warningly instructive, and that I know of no better way to secure this desirable contact than by studying with intelligent sympathy the life of Poe.

But is it necessary to yield to the unfavorable biographers of Poe all the points they make? "Of course not," replies the partisan biographer, who immediately proceeds to yield as little as he can. This is an entirely

human procedure, but it has obvious disadvantages, and perhaps it will be well to try to approach our problem from another point of view. How much do we really know about Poe's life? At first thought it would appear that we know a good deal. We have several elaborate biographies, and since the appearance of Professor Woodberry's volume in 1885 it has been possible to say that modern methods of thorough and comparatively unpartisan investigation have been applied to the study of Poe's life. Whatever Professor Woodberry's defects of sympathy, I do not see how anyone can test his book minutely, as I have done, without making the frank acknowledgment that his labors mark an important epoch in Poe scholarship.[1] As for the interest that is taken in Poe's life, that is really immense, and it is increasing, as any one who keeps a Poe scrap-book will testify. No details seem too small to report, and, if possible, to argue over. But, despite the apparent wealth of material, are we in a position to say that we know enough about Poe to give an entirely adequate and authoritative account of his life? I cannot answer this question for others, but I can answer it for myself. About four years ago I was engaged in writing a biography of Poe which I had carried down to the year 1837. I stopped there, and I have not added a line to it since, because three facts were borne in upon

[1] Since this paper was written, Professor Woodberry has expanded his early work into a portly biography of two volumes, which will prove indispensable to students. It throws some light on the dark places in Poe's life mentioned in the text, but in the main it does not necessitate any serious modification of the statements here made.

me. The first was that there were batches of letters and papers in existence which presumably threw important light upon Poe's life, but which for the time being I was not able to examine. The second was that I was not satisfied that a sufficiently thorough study had been made of the newspapers published during certain years in at least six cities. The third was that from the spring of 1831 to the autumn of 1833 Poe's life was practically a blank, and that, it was therefore impossible to say what facts were in lurking ready to affect my interpretation of the whole course of his after life. If the Poe who won the prize of $100 in October, 1833, for his story "The MS. Found in a Bottle" was morally and socially the same Poe who got himself dismissed from West Point in March, 1831—if the obscure years marked only a period of intellectual and artistic development such as might have been normally expected, and, if they concealed no experiences essentially different from those recorded between the years 1825 to 1831 and 1834 to 1849, then it seemed possible to construct a biography which would at least stand the tests of the readers and students who accepted my points of view. But suppose the Poe of 1833 was quite a different Poe in some respects from the Poe of 1831; then it was entirely possible that a biography constructed on the theory that he was essentially the same Poe might not stand even subsequent tests applied to it by its naturally partial author. Although the obscure period was a short one, it came at an important point, and it seemed better to stop and begin investigating. A series of accidents carried me back two centuries and over to England, and instead of investigating Poe I got entangled with an

even more mysterious and remarkable person who lived at Stoke Newington a century before Poe went to school there—to wit Daniel Defoe, the author of "Robinson Crusoe." But, however little right a deserter may have to preach investigation to Poe students, that must be the burden of my counsel. We must not suppose for one instant that we yet have sufficient material for passing a definite and adequate judgment upon Poe the man. An important batch of letters has just seen the light. There are, as I happen to know, other letters extant that possess distinct value, and there is the chance that facts of more or less importance may come to light from diaries and newspapers.

Let me illustrate somewhat concretely what I mean. Poe's life in the city of Richmond falls into four main periods—his early childhood, his schooldays from August, 1820, to February, 1826; his editorial connection with the *Southern Literary Messenger* from the middle of 1835 to the beginning of 1837,[1] and his visit from July to the end of September, 1849, just before he went to Baltimore to die. A fair amount of light has been thrown upon his social status during three of these periods, but very little is known about it during the months when he was editor of the *Messenger*. Old schoolmates who were living in the city during those months pass over the period in their reminiscences written in after years. We may accept his own statement that his friends received him with open arms, or we may believe that poverty and hard

[1] See on this point the letter from Poe to Mrs. Sarah J. Hale communicated by Mr. Killis Campbell to *The Nation*, July 1, 1909.

work and the hostility of an influential family and other causes led to a comparative social obscuration. We do not know clearly how his habits affected his relations with his former friends and his new employer, the proprietor of the *Messenger;* the circumstances of his marriage with his child-cousin Virginia are distinctly mysterious; there is a possibility that the dark Baltimore period may have extended its shadow over this Richmond period. Even with regard to a matter which it would seem should have been thoroughly investigated long ago, viz: his editorial management of the *Messenger* as that is revealed in the pages of the magazine itself, it may be fairly held that the facts have not yet been thoroughly sifted and given to the world. I think I do not exaggerate when I say both that there is need of additional and close study of the material we have already amassed, and that there is a chance that some stray entry in a diary or a reference in a letter may throw light on this or that dark period in the narrative and thus help us to a clearer conception of Poe's character. I know at least that in my own study of that character I have been checking myself at almost every step with the query—Is there a sufficient basis for this inference?

There is another point about another Richmond period that may bear mentioning. Poe is usually depicted for us as a romantically melancholy and lonely boy. We are told about his haunting the grave of Mrs. Stanard by night. We picture him as a sensitive orphan child, proud, misunderstood, yearning for sympathy. How far this exceptional boyhood helps distinguished psychological pathologists to give us a scientific diagnosis of the

disease or diseases under which Poe labored, I am not competent to say. Perhaps I ought not to take up my biography again until I have acquired an M.D. degree, for to judge from the way some gentlemen are writing and talking, "great wits" are not merely "to madness near allied," but they are diseased from head to toe and from the cradle to the grave. I am not prepared to deny that if Poe really haunted Mrs. Stanard's grave for nights, he was suffering from some sort of morbid affection; but I am inclined to wonder whether a poetical story which seems to be supported only by Poe's own testimony given about twenty-five years after the supposed event ought to be taken seriously and whether we have any real warrant for representing Poe down to the time he entered the University of Virginia as a very abnormal boy. It is at least curious that after a pretty careful piecing together of all the information I was able to gather with regard to Poe's school days in Richmond I should have been left with the impression that, if we did not read into the period notions derived from our study of his antecedents and of his life from his seventeenth year to his death, we should have scarcely a verifiable fact to cause us to suspect that he was not a normal boy. I may even add that the information accessible with regard to his sports and the light thrown upon Richmond life by the newspapers of the time left me surprised at the points of resemblance that could be discovered between boy life in Richmond in 1824 and that of 1874, which I myself could well remember. Here again I do not wish to seem unduly insistent upon my own points of view. I merely wish once more to ask the question whether we really know the essential

facts of Poe's life and comprehend the evolution of his character as well as we think we do, and to urge upon all in possession of documents or family traditions likely in any way to aid us to put their information at the disposal of students. It is not fair to pass moral judgments upon the mature man about whose frailties so much is known, until we are better acquainted with the voluntary and involuntary elements that made up the formative period of his life.

But I am nearing the end of my allotted time and all I have done is to assert that, on the whole, we have accomplished a good deal for Poe's fame in the past sixty years and that there is still much to do before we shall have the right to feel that we understand thoroughly the man and his life. To most people, however, it is the man's works that count, some holding that they represent the high-water-mark of American literary achievement, others maintaining that they are possessed of but slight intellectual and moral value and of only a very limited æsthetic value. What of these much discussed works in prose and verse? Shall we ever reach anything approaching a consensus of expert and popular opinion with regard to them? Has the Poe critic as much encouragement to pursue his studies as the Poe biographer has?

All things considered, it seems to me that he has. Not only have the editions, the monographs, the essays multiplied greatly, but what is more important, Poe in the last twenty years, through small volumes of selections and through various sorts of anthologies, has made his way into the schools. We poor teachers of English are constantly belabored for the supposititious inefficiency of

our methods of instruction; but I am vastly mistaken if, thanks partly to us, there is not a much larger amount of intelligent reading done in this country today by a proportionately larger number of people than was the case twenty years ago. Reading as one of the means to aristocratic culture, has probably shown no such advance; it may even have retrograded, though I am not sure of that, except in so far as our attitude toward the great, the indispensable culture of Greece and Rome leaves me dissatisfied; but reading as a means to democratic culture has made, I believe, an advance truly extraordinary. Now these two sorts of reading seem bound to affect each other, and they are continually coming together in our schools and colleges. Provincial, sectional, crassly individualistic estimates of authors and books are held with decreasing tenacity in a country of increasing democratic culture. Schools, newspapers, lectures, and literary clubs of all sorts may seem to us, in our pessimistic moods, to be merely appliances for the dissemination of bad taste and misinformation, and they do disseminate a depressing deal of both, but, at bottom and in the large, their influence is beneficial in creating and transmitting interest and in checking extravagant individualism. These agencies, not only make for an increased reading and study of Poe and other leading American writers, but they also tend to normalize opinion about them, to render it less and less likely that bizarre judgments, whether favorable or unfavorable, will be passed upon them. This formation of an intelligent public opinion upon literary topics is necessarily a matter of generations, and, if it ever tends to check the legitimate,

reasonable play of individual taste and judgment, it will be a bad thing for us as a people. I am optimistic enough, however, to believe that our democratic culture will improve our national taste and judgment and still leave free play for individual preferences, and I count upon this culture finally to give Poe a very high, if not the highest, place among our ante-bellum writers. I do not think that the common sense which will always characterize democratic culture—it does not hurt any kind of culture by the way—will tolerate the notion some acute critics have tried to spread that Poe's poems and tales are not real literature after all. Such a notion means nothing unless you can define real literature. If someone were to contend, for example, that no real literature had been produced since the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, it might be possible to comprehend him and even to sympathize with him. If someone else were to contend that any writing or writings that continued after the lapse of a generation to attract the attention of publishers, readers, and critics was real literature because it displayed vitality, it might be possible to comprehend and even to sympathize with him. But when gentlemen calmly draw their own lines between these two extremes and say that this or that book or writer is on the no-literature side of their privately drawn line, I am tempted to enquire with what instruments and by whose authority they perform their feats of critico-engineering. While waiting for their explanations, I will venture to draw my own line and to make the not very startling assertion that Poe's work does not lie on the wrong side of it.

Does this statement mean that at the close of this paper

I am ranging myself with the partisans of Poe? If it does, I am quite content to take an humble place in their ranks. I doubt, however, whether it really is a partisan statement. One marked characteristic of democratic culture is its readiness to give heed to what has been done and thought in other countries and to adopt and assimilate whatever seems beneficial. Poe, on the whole, appears to have counted for the world outside America more than any other American author. This fact is likely in time to produce more and more impression upon the minds of Poe's countrymen. It is furthermore a pretty plain lesson of literary history that the writer who makes the double appeal of verse and prose, especially when much of his prose is imaginative, has more chances with posterity—more chance of being really read—than writers who make the single appeal of verse alone, or prose alone. And besides the appeal made by his verse and his prose—Poe, we must never forget, wrote the *Raven*, which perhaps disputes with Gray's *Elegy* the honor or as some disdainful, hypercritical persons would hold, the dishonor of being the most popular poem in the language—besides this appeal, Poe makes the appeal that is always made by the mysterious, ill-starred genius. Now this matter of the appeal or the appeals made by a writer is even more important than we are apt to think it at first blush. The reader and the student are already bewildered and oppressed by the number of really great and good books and writers that demand to be read. As the competition grows keener, the selective process will surely grow more drastic, and just as surely the authors of double and triple appeal are going to have a greater

and greater advantage over their rivals. The comparatively small bulk of Poe's poetry and of his best tales may prevent our ranking him with certain writers of more copious genius, but this very costiveness of genius may stand him in good stead centuries hence when some of his chief competitors are really known only as Elizabethan poets like Daniel and Drayton are now known by a selection or two in the anthologies.

No—while I have no desire to pose as a prophet, I think I am neither rash nor partisan in pointing out the advantages with which Poe seems to me to be beginning his second century. As I have said elsewhere, he claims attention in four ways. First through his interesting, pathetic life. Secondly through his criticism and his miscellaneous prose, which is of great importance in the history of the development of our literature, is obviously the product of an exceptionally clear and acute mind, has been found valuable by students of the art of fiction, and is based upon æsthetic ideals and a definite artistic theory, sincere and intelligent though lacking in catholicity and in a sound, historical sense. Thirdly, through his fiction, which is probably unsurpassed in its peculiar kind. He is a master of the ratiocinative tale, including the detective story, which he may be said to have originated. In tales of compelling horror, of haunting mystery, of weirdly ethereal beauty, of tragic situation, of morbid analysis of conscience, he has had no clear superior, and in his attempts at the grotesque he has shown power and versatility, though in the opinion of some, little true humor. It is usual to say that his stories are remote from life; but it is certainly true that they deal

with themes and situations which have interested men since the dawn of literature. It is also said that in his stories Poe displays invention rather than imagination, but I am inclined to believe that in literature as in life, like calls to like and that it is Poe's imagination that holds our imaginations spellbound. In the construction of his stories and occasionally in his verbal style he yields to no writer of his class—in other words, he takes high rank as a conscious artist. His appeal is limited by the fact that the substance of his fiction lies apart, not precisely from life but from ordinary human experience; but interest in the abnormal is by no means an inhuman or an unhuman characteristic, and the reception given Poe's tales in France alone would seem, after all allowances have been made, to confute the assertion often risked that they are meretricious in conception and in execution. We can scarcely be too often reminded that Burke's warning against indicting whole peoples applies to literary matters just as well as it does to political. A people or a large body of persons may go crazy for a short time, but they do not stay crazy, and, if a book stands the test of years with any people, or considerable body of readers, the chances are that it is full of merit. I know of no more foolish conduct a critic can be guilty of than to endeavor to demonstrate that a man who has produced and continues to produce fairly striking emotional and intellecual effects is little more than a charlatan. It is at least obvious that such critics are not charlatans, for they belong to the class of dupes—they are duped by their own overacuteness. And let us remember also that it is unsafe to pay much attention to analytical critics who would

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have us believe that the effects produced by a famous book or writer can be reproduced if one will only follow a formula. Such critics generally fail to recognize that they are dealing with something truly alive, and that the vital principle escapes their analysis. Bland souls, they present us with a formula for writing a Poe tale of mystery or horror, and conveniently forget to furnish us at the same time with a tale written according to their formula which at all equals one of his.

But, although we need not despair of Poe's growing in favor with the American public, there is abundant room to despair of any critic's changing his opinions at the point of someone else's pen, and so I hasten to my fourth and last head.

Poe makes his fourth claim to our attention in the slender volume of his verses. He was primarily a poet, and perhaps it is as a poet that he is chiefly valued by Englishmen and Americans. His genius—on the side of melody and color—matured surprisingly, not to say regrettably, early, and even when his search for artistic perfection and the embarrassments of his life are taken into due account, his comparative infertility is a matter for wonder and disappointment. But his limited range accounts in part for the flawlessness of his workmanship when his art is at its best and for the intensity of the impression he produces upon appreciative readers. It is no small achievement to have sung a few imperishable songs of bereaved love and illusive beauty. It is no small achievement to have produced individual and unexcelled strains of harmony which have since so rung in the ears of brother poets that echoes of them may be detected even in the

work of such original and accomplished versemen as Rossetti and Swinburne. It is no small achievement to have pursued one's ideal until one's dying day, conscious the while that, great as one's impediments have been from without, one's chief obstacle has been one's own self.

Yes, this man was a poet, and, whether great or not, a unique poet. We may not go to him for insight into the human heart such as Shakespeare gives us; we may not go to him for sublime inspiration such as Milton can give us; we may not go to him for the humanity we find in Burns, the power we find in Byron, the idealism we find in Shelley, or the sweet wholesomeness we find in Longfellow, but we who care for him do go to him for his own note of longing and despair, for his own note of indescribable poetic magic, which, so far as I know, is to be found in no other of our poets—the note he strikes, for example, in the stanza:

> And all my days are trances,
> And all my nightly dreams
> Are where thy dark eye glances,
> And where thy footstep gleams,
> In what ethereal dances,
> By what eternal streams.

The man who wrote these lines is with his own Israfel. He is worthy of

> that lyre
> By which he sits and sings—
> The trembling, living lyre
> Of those unusual strings.

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THE UNIQUE GENIUS OF POE'S POETRY

OLIVER HUCKEL, S.T.D.

It is not my part to tell the story of Poe's life or to discuss its problems. Nor is it my duty to defend the fame of Poe. In spite of all detractors, his fame is secure among the immortals. But my pleasant task is merely to sound forth another note of appreciation among the many tributes that are being made to his memory and especially to speak a few words concerning the distinctive genius of his poetry. The exquisite notes of witchery in the poems of Poe, and their pure song-quality, lift him to a place in the choir of the world's great singers,—not among the stately epic poets, such as Homer, Milton, or Dante; nor with the masters of the poetic drama, such as Sophocles, Shakespeare or Schiller; but rather among those wonderful skylarks of song who have poured forth their souls in rapturous lyrics, as perchance Sappho of the immortal fragments and traditions; as Herrick, fresh as the morning dew of his seventeenth century; as Shelley, an echo of far ethereal melodies; or, as Keats, the soul of supernal beauty, or Robert Burns, voice of the heart and of all human tenderness and nobility.

We have had some worthy names to conjure with in our American literature,—Emerson, poet oracular and prophet of another sphere; Longfellow, the exquisite

idealizer of common life; Bryant, the majestic bard of Nature; Whittier, the plaintive psalmist of the new world. But Poe has a rapturous music and a haunting mystery—a ghostly supernatural enchantment that is unique among them all. He is the first absolute artist in our literature—with the rarest rapture of pure music and absolute devotion to pure beauty.

Poe belongs most naturally to that noble group of impassioned Southern singers—Francis Scott Key, the fervid chanter of our national anthem; Father Ryan, the tender mystic of the valley of silence; Henry Timrod, high priest at Nature's altar; Paul Hamilton Hayne, interpreter of the subtle beauty of the South; James R. Randall, the passionate singer of *Maryland, My Maryland;* Sidney Lanier, prophet of the holiness of beauty, and the beauty of holiness. Poe has distinct place among them all. He is the nightingale of our Southern poets—singing at night, singing on nocturnal themes, but with all the passionate tenderness and infinite pathos of his own angel Israfel "whose heart-strings are a lute."

We do not forget tonight the genius of Poe in the inimitable prose-tales. Such masterly productions as "The Gold Bug," "The Manuscript Found in a Bottle," and the spiritual allegory in "William Wilson," have scarcely been excelled in literature. Neither do we forget the genius of his critical work, keen as a rapier, perhaps a trifle too severe, but marvelously true in the majority of his judgments. But others will speak of these things in some detail. In this brief address, I would merely have you recall something of the genius of his marvelous poetry—such a poem as *Israfel* just mentioned that came gushing

forth out of his early youth, a careless glory of beauty and music, in those days before he was touched with infinite sorrow and inconsolable memories; such as the poem of *Annabel Lee*, a miracle of melody, with a universal heart-appeal, pure music, magical in its exquisite sweetness and haunting refrains; such a poem as those wonderful and startling verses called *For Annie*,—"When this fever called living is over;" such a poem as that weird and awful conception of *The City in the Sea*,—"The mystical kingdom of death;" such a poem as *The Haunted Palace*, terribly splendid in its portrayal of the ruin of the palace of a soul; such a poem as *Ulalume*, that weird legend of temptation by ignoble passion, and the power of a holy memory to save,—"a dream of the dark tarn of Auber, and the mystic mid woodland of Wier,"—a symphony in tone color,—as primitive as "an Icelandic saga with the surge of the sea in it" or a faint weird echo of "murmuring gurgling waters in the depths of a gloomy canyon of the Sierras." Or see his genius in such a poem as *The Bells*, that rare piece of fantasy, ringing alternately with light and with majestic music,—its words and rhymes, its rhythm and cadences, and repetends most perfectly fitted to its themes upon which it rings the wonderful changes, like one of the majestic fugues of John Sebastian Bach. Or see his genius again in those several poems of the mystic idealization of great sorrow and bereavement. The first lines *To Helen*, one of the most exquisite of his poems, serenely exultant, crystalline perfect, containing those two superb lines,

> The glory that was Greece
> And the grandeur that was Rome,—

compressing, as one says into their brief space, "all the rich and high magnificence of dead centuries." The poem, *The Sleeper*, a picture "drenched with the mystery, the ethereal beauty of a summer night;" the poem *Lenore*, of which Thomas Wentworth Higginson once said: "Never in American literature was such a fountain of melody flung into the air as when *Lenore* first appeared." You remember it,—full of feeling, of scorn, of hot indignation, of exultant defiance, of the triumph of deathless love bursting forth "like martial trumpets." And then, his genius in the poem of *The Raven*, mayhap not his greatest poem, but surely his most famous, and certainly symbolic of his own mysterious life. A stroke of genius created that poem. Its royal borrowings were minted into new gold. It was fused in the alembic of his own soul. It cried out from his own heart and life. It is the fervor and passion of his own weird and majestic melancholy. It is the superb portrayal of tragic mystery, of shadowed beauty, of awful sorrow. It is a marvelous mingling of fire and music, of passion and despair. It is a work of genius, absolutely unforgetable by the world. It stands secure in its magic spell among the most remarkable poems of the ages. It has gone into many languages and become a part of the priceless heritage for all time. "It is," as one says, "the final threnody in memory of his lost Lenore, once the queenliest dead, but now elected to live immortally young in his somber palaces of song. *The Raven* is a requiem of imperial affection, a poem that takes rank with the unworded and unearthly harmonies of *The Dead March in Saul.*"

No one's life and work were ever so intimately conjoined

as Poe's. His poetry was himself—mysterious, weird, melancholy, passionate. His poems cannot escape from him without his very life. Every one of his great poems,—and there are only about a dozen of these,—were wrung from the great crises of his life, and are full of the same spirit-varying phases of "the great enigma of death and the majestic musings of an inconsolable soul."

Poe was, as all the South is, a worshipper of the beautiful. His supreme love for the beautiful was his consecrating and his consuming passion. He loved it with a marvelous awe and a sublime devotion; his unutterable conceptions were full of gloom and glory. His only religion and his only sacrifice on earth were his unceasing fidelity to love and beauty, and his unconquerable longings for the unattainable. His mystical cadences seem to bring us into the very shadow of the supernatural. They are an enchanted treasure, more precious than silver or gold.

The French poet and critic, Baudelaire, who translated him marvelously well into the French speech, saw Poe as "a new-world minstrel strayed from some proper habitat to this rude and dissonant America, which was for Poe only a vast prison through which he ran hither and thither, with the feverish agitation of a being created to breathe in another world and where his interior life, spiritual as a poet, was but one perpetual effort to escape the influence of this mundane atmosphere. Clasp the sensitive hand of this troubled singer dreeing thus his weird, and enter into the night with him and share his dreams, and lament with him the charm of evanescence, and the supreme beauty and the unattainable." So Poe lures us into his unforgetable "night of memories and sighs."

But could we have had the poems of Poe without the tragic life of Poe,—without the suffering, poverty, passionate love, awful losses, infinite tragedy and sorrow? They are the tear drops of his life, yea, the blood drops. They are the distillation of his awful agonies. He paid a great price for his poems,—precious may the world esteem them. And yet, if as he believed and so often contended, sorrow and beauty were the poet's truest themes, and love and death the great sanctifiers and transfigurers, and if, as he so often said, the poetic feeling was the greatest of earthly pleasures,—then even in his awful pain and agony, in his tragedies and sorrows, was not the great artist made, the great poet born,—were there not constant compensations and was not his heritage of woe, after all, his most precious possession?

But friends, was there not another side? Many of us of this generation love Robert Louis Stevenson. There are many points of kinship between Poe and Stevenson. Both loved the sea and its adventures, and things romantic and occult. "The Manuscript in a Bottle" perchance suggested *The Bottle Imp* of Stevenson. Certainly "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" is exactly in the vein of Poe. Both writers were victims of untimely disease. Poe we call the greater genius; Stevenson the greater heart. We love Stevenson for his intense humanness and his heroic spirit. Have we been blind to these things in Poe?

His poems and other writings only represent a part of the man. Even as we read his poems, I feel that we ought to revise our traditional and prejudiced view of Edgar Allan Poe. We cannot forget his faults and failings,—for the world has dwelt long and too insistently upon

them,—but on this occasion we may well remember sympathetically some of the finer traits of his life—which were as truly part of him—more truly, I think, than the darker side. There were many kindly and lovable features of his life which glint forth at times in his poems, as well as in the reminiscences of some of his best friends.

Remember that, besides his sad and weird side, he had a side which was bright and cheerful. Some of his friends who knew him well bear testimony to the fact that often he was most cheerful and even playful in mood and brilliant in light-hearted repartee. Remember the humor that comes out at times in some of his brilliant stories, like that rollicking farce, "The Spectacles," which tells the story of the near-sighted young man who married his great-grandmother. And there are here and there light, brilliant, playful touches in some of his poems. Remember the purity, the clean-mindedness of his work. Not a single line in all his poetry or his prose that is unworthy to be read by the purest-hearted. It is a wonderful record for one who loved the occult, the gruesome, the abnormal. It shows character and ideals.

Remember the exquisite faithfulness, sweetness and devotion of his home-life, in both his poetry and in the reality of his life. His child-wife, Virginia, as one says, was "a dark-eyed, dark-haired daughter of the South; her face exquisitely lovely—the most delicate realization of the poet's ideal." And his love for his wife was "a sort of rapturous worship."

Remember also that his poems, in delicacy and nobility of phrasing and feeling, as well as the letters of his friends, bear testimony to the fact that throughout his life and

even in the midst of his sorrows, he had the instincts and the constant manners of a gentleman. He was proud but genial, handsome but grave, courtly and courteous, eloquent and kindly.

In a word, there is a most beautiful and attractive side to Poe's life. I love to think that on his finer side, he was an embodiment of much of the genius of the South. He had the steadfast Southern devotion to ideals. He had no sordid love of money. He was never unfaithful to honor. He was always in pursuit of some noble quest. His whole ambition was literary achievement, and he never wavered, in spite of suffering, loss and defeat.

His poems show that he had the instinctive Southern chivalry for women. They are full of the mystery of beauty, of the idealization of women—of the eternal worship and longings of love. His poems show the stately and majestic sadness which, after all, is something of the background of our Southern life and nature—the feeling of an exquisite beauty too delicate for earth, the sense of present happiness that must presently end, an outward gayety that hides a secret sorrow—the persistent intimation of mystery, the sense of evanescence, the tender love for the past and of the glory that has vanished.

It is true there is no definite geography, only vague and mystical locations, in Poe's poems, yet there is certainly enough of local color and of pervasive atmosphere to identify his poems absolutely with the South. And I am quite sure that his music in verse, his pathetic sweetness of speech, his love of soft refrains were largely inspired by the soft croonings of some African mammy in childhood's days, by the gracious caressing voices of

Southern women, by the whole dreamy delicious mystic atmosphere of the Southland.

Only three themes did Poe touch in his poetry,—Love, Beauty, Death. He felt that this was all that poetry could do. We are glad that other poets have struck other notes. We are glad for a greater diapason, for the strong notes of Life, and Faith and Work. We are glad for Chivalry and Heroism and Achievement that stir the poetry in some mighty souls. We rejoice that other equally true poets, like Tennyson and Browning in England, and Emerson and Lowell and Lanier in America, while loving beauty with their whole soul, love it, as it seems to me, with a sturdier faith and a more wholesome cheeriness.

Yet it would be ungracious to find fault with what Poe was not. We can only be grateful for the golden treasuries which he has given us as his heritage to us and to the world. Literature would be forever the poorer to deprive it of these exquisite pearls of the passion of genius. His sad life we may remember in pity; much of his work may be forgotten; but the few perfect poems that his spirit wrought out are among the imperishable treasures of mankind.

Friends, the Southern people and especially we of Baltimore must erect to the honor of the genius of Poe a noble and worthy monument in this city—a monument, perchance not so large, but as exquisite in its way as the Scott monument in Edinburgh. The Southern people must build it. For Poe's genius is the exquisite flower of the South, as well as a marvelous creation of our whole wonderful American life. The Southern people must

build this monument. If we show that we are in earnest in our appreciation of Poe and in our endeavor in this movement, we shall not lack coöperation from our whole people of America and from all the world. But the burden and the glory of this work belongs to the South. It must be their splendid achievement. I know that we shall yet see it,—a superb work of art in a commanding centre of this goodly city of Baltimore, that is so inseparably linked with the name and fame of Edgar Allan Poe.

When Lafayette made his visit to this country in 1824, and came to Baltimore, he went with his staff to the Westminster Churchyard to the grave of his old Revolutionary friend, General David Poe, and kneeling on the ground, he kissed the sod, and exclaimed, "Here lies a noble heart!"

There will come a day, I believe, when a new and beautiful charity, in form like an angel, shall yet come to another grave that lies alongside of the old General's in that same cemetery, and kneeling down in immemorial atonement for the harshness of past judgments, shall print a kiss of loving pity on the sod above the grave of genius, and shall say, "God bless him, and forgive him. Here lies a noble heart!"

THE PERSONALITY OF POE

JOHN PRENTISS POE, LL.D.

When I was invited to take part in this most interesting celebration in honor of Edgar Allan Poe, my father's cousin and the husband of my mother's sister, the thought instantly occurred to me that it might be more becoming in me to be a silent spectator than an active participant and I hesitated for a space to accept the gracious invitation.

A little reflection, however, made it clear that the severest good taste would not only not be offended by my joining publicly in these memorial exercises, but, that, on the contrary, all who like me bear his name and share his blood should most willingly do all in our power to show our grateful appreciation of this distinguished tribute to our kinsman.

It is quite impossible for the members of his family to observe without the deepest sensibility his steadily increasing fame and the generous recognition the world over of his marvelous genius.

Especially are we gratified that here in Baltimore this movement in commemoration of his illustrious place as a star of the first magnitude in the firmament of letters was begun.

He did not happen to be born in Baltimore.

His eyes first saw the light in Boston and his gifted mother, for whom he never failed to cherish the deepest filial admiration and devotion, impressed upon him the duty of remembering that there she had found her best and most sympathetic friends.

But he is identified with Baltimore in his lineage.

Part of his early life was passed here. His remains lie in the venerable graveyard where the bones of several generations of his kindred repose, and here, more than thirty years ago, before impartial history had fully rescued his reputation as a man from the venomous calumnies which for years it had so unjustly suffered, the first Memorial ever erected in America to a poet was reared in his honor.

Here, therefore, it is peculiarly fitting that the Centennial of his birth should be celebrated with all the emphasis that just appreciation of his extraordinary genius and literary achievements, and sympathy for his sorrows can inspire.

During the long interval since on the anniversary of

> The lonesome October of his most immemorial year,

his earthly remains were laid to rest by the side of his ancestors in Westminster churchyard, every material incident of his life has been brought to light, either by the hand of sympathetic admiration, or of malevolent criticism.

The world has been truly told of all his movements from his earliest boyhood down to the melancholy hour when the pleasing prospect of extrication and release at last from the corroding trials and troubles of his stren-

uous struggle for bread and fame was suddenly extinguished under circumstances of the deepest pathos.

One by one the malignant slanders which pursued him into the silence of his premature and, for a time, neglected grave, and blackened his memory for years have been met and refuted by indisputable proof laboriously collected and the world has at last been brought to the knowledge of the gracious courtesy and the real excellence and dignity which almost invariably marked his demeanor.

The one infirmity to which all his errors were due has never been denied. Side by side with Burns and Byron he stands in the pitiful sorrow and shame of this terrible misfortune.

But, except when his peculiarly sensitive organization yielded to the destructive influence which robbed him for a time of his intellect and self-control, all trustworthy accounts represent him as a man of exquisite refinement and grace, no less conspicuous for the elegance of his manners than for his almost supramortal eloquence and marvelous intellectual endowments.

The testimony of those who worked with him, who day by day witnessed the constant manifestations of his sweet and uncomplaining patience, his gentle yet proud resignation to the overwhelming disappointments which seemed to crowd around his path and at times well nigh drove him to despair tells the story of the development in him of the edifying virtues which not infrequently find their richest bloom amidst the bitterness of the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick.

Mrs. Osgood who certainly had the amplest opportunity during the most eventful and trying years of his life of

observing his conduct and behavior declares, that "though she had heard of aberrations on his part from the straight and narrow path she had never seen him otherwise than gentle, generous, well-bred and fastidiously refined."

And to this she adds, that "to a sensitive and delicately-nurtured woman there was a peculiar and irresistible charm with which he invariably approached all women who won his respect."

Indeed the proof of his habitual reverence for woman than which no more conclusive evidence of the nobility of manhood can be found, comes as the fitting climax of his lofty conception of the true poetic principle, which he delineates with such amazing beauty and power and whose mastery over him he so proudly avows.

He owns it in all noble thoughts; in all unworldly motives; in all holy impulses; in all chivalrous, generous and self-sacrificing deeds.

He feels it in the beauty of woman; in the grace of her step; in the luster of her eye; in the melody of her voice; in her soft laughter; in her sigh; in the harmony of the rustling of her robes.

He deeply feels it in her winning endearments; in her burning enthusiasms; in her gracious charities; in her meek and devotional endurances; but above all, ah! far above all, he kneels to it; he worships it; in the faith; in the purity; in the strength; in the altogether divine majesty of her love.

Listening to these glowing words, who shall couple his name with depravity or dishonor?

The weakness, which undoubtedly did imperil his life, diminish to the world's great and irreparable loss the products of his genius and furnish to his enemies some

color for their calumnies, he deeply deplored and strenuously struggled to overcome.

"I have absolutely *no* pleasure," he writes, one year before his death, "in the stimulants in which I sometimes so madly indulge.

"It has not been in the pursuit of pleasure that I have periled life and reputation and reason. It has been in the desperate attempt to escape from torturing memories."

"No one," says Ingram, in his candid and discriminating analysis of Poe's character and career, "who really knew the man, either personally or through his works, but will believe this disclosure, revealed in one of his intensely glowing letters to Mrs. Whitman."

The sad confession is now quite universally accepted as the truth, and the harsh and pitiless condemnation of his occasional excesses, distorted and exaggerated as these were by malice and envy immediately after his death, has been softened and subdued by a more just and charitable judgment.

This is the final judgment and it will stand without danger of reversal.

It recognizes the supremacy of his surpassing genius, but disdains to disparage or tarnish it by gloating over the frailties of temperament, steadily fought against, seldom victorious, conquering only in hours of extreme anguish and sorrow and always lamented with an intensity of grief known only to the exquisitely sensitive souls of those who, like him, feel the stain of such weakness more keenly than a wound.

I speak of this distressing fact because reference to it

could only be avoided by confining myself strictly to a consideration of his commanding position in the literary world.

Sincerely believing as I do his own solemn asservation that his "soul was incapable of dishonor and that, with the exception of occasional follies and excesses, to which he was driven by intolerable sorrow, he could call to mind no act of his life done in his conscious moments which could justly bring to his cheek the blush of shame," I am not willing to ignore or belittle this sad side of his career, and upon this memorable occasion content myself with allusions exclusively to the mighty achievements of his superbly gifted intellect.

While there may be room for controversy as to the frequency and extent of the dominion which stimulants had acquired over him, and as to the errors which he committed whilst under their maddening influence, assuredly he was wholly free from the vices which stain the soul.

There was in him no dissimulation nor deceit, nor concealment of his frailties.

Conscious of his own splendid powers, no ignoble envy of the success of others degraded his haughty spirit.

> On desperate seas long wont to roam,

he endured with proud reticence the extreme pangs of poverty and destitution.

He saw his idolized wife wasted by illness and disease passing through the dark valley of the shadow of death, suffering from the want of comforts which he was powerless to supply, and

> When her high-born kinsmen came
> And bore her away from him,

his reason for a time tottered and fell, but no pressure of grief, or sorrow or privation ever betrayed or drove him into the crooked paths of dishonesty or fraud.

There may be some who think that after all the facts of his private life are of no consequence and that in the enjoyment of the rich fruits of his great genius, it matters little what kind of man he was, whether good or bad, honorable or depraved in the ordinary relationships of life and society.

I do not agree with this view.

Deep and ardent as may be our love of the beautiful; keen as may be our enjoyment of the consummate work of those who portray or depict it in its highest developments, whether with pen or brush or chisel, our pleasure in the contemplation and study of its most artistic manifestations cannot fail to be intensified and exalted by the consoling knowledge that the towering genius whose soul speaks to us from the past in the entrancing melody and commanding power of glowing words, or in the subduing fascination of breathing canvas, or in the potent spell of majestic marble, was animated not alone by a dominating sense of the beautiful, but was imbued also with a reverential love of the good and true.

From the authentic extrinsic evidence of his life and the resistless intrinsic evidence of his imperishable works, of such a lofty nature, was, I verily believe, the soul of Edgar Allan Poe.

And surely we can appreciate the better his exquisite poetry and read with increased admiration and delight his marvelous prose creations if, while our minds and souls are aglow with their beauty and power, we can truly picture their author as the unfortunate victim

Whom unmerciful disaster followed fast and followed faster

but all the while pure in heart and undefiled by the deadly pollution of immorality and vice.

And so, too, on the other hand, if it be indeed true that the life of this man of transcendent powers was disfigured by deplorable lapses from the path of honor and virtue, which justice requires us to censure and condemn, may we not in our own hours of weakness and failure—of pitiable yieldings to temptation—of gloom and despondency be stimulated to renewed and continuous struggle out of darkness into light by the knowledge that he, even in the immensity of his vastly superior gifts, was unable to stand where we fell?

And in the study of his shortcomings may we not find for ourselves hope and encouragement in our strivings after the kingdom of righteousness and peace.

We should not, then, as some have done, dissociate Edgar Allan Poe, the poet, from Edgar Allan Poe, the man, and whilst extolling the one with the highest encomiums turn from the other with aversion or reproach.

Rather should we study the poet and the man together and upon the gratifying results of this study rest his right to stand upon the pinnacle of glory where for all time the verdict of the civilized world has placed him.

Knowledge, we are told, is like the mystic ladder in the patriarch's dream. Its base rests upon the primeval earth, its crest is lost in the shadowy splendor of the empyrean, while the great authors, who for traditionary ages have held the chain of science and philosophy, of

poetry and erudition, are the angels ascending and descending the sacred scale, maintaining, as it were, the communication between man and Heaven.

In this view we need not wonder at the instinctive longing of the human heart for a close and sympathetic intimacy with the supremely gifted amongst the children of men, whose transcendent masterpieces left behind them as enduring manifestations of their genius, are a never-failing source of strength and consolation, reminding us of humbler clay that the blessed Evangely of surpassing harmony and beauty which they ceaselessly proclaim may sooner or later reach even to the least of us and lift us up at last to our kinship with the sky.

By the immeasurable superiority of their commanding influence over that of any merely physical achievements they justify the admiration and homage they inspire, and create an irresistible desire to transmit their name and fame to future generations by visible memorials in their honor, speaking perpetually to the eye of their glory and renown.

By so much as dominion over the mind and souls of men surpasses all other dominion, by so much does the power of the supremely endowed author exceed in permanent ascendancy that of all other earthly power.

Amongst the conspicuous heroes of ancient days King David stands out in towering superiority, and yet pre-eminent as he was in State-craft and in battle, the fruits of his victories and conquests have perished, whilst the exalting influence of his immortal verse shall sway mankind until time shall be no more.

It softened men of iron mould,
It gave them virtues not their own,
No ear so dull, no soul so cold
That felt not, fired not at its tone,
Till David's lyre grew mightier than his throne.

I shall not venture upon any delineation of the great gifts of Edgar Allan Poe, nor attempt any critical analysis of his literary genius.

Such a task is beyond my feeble powers, and after what we have heard today would be both presumptuous and inexcusably superfluous.

Rather let me give you some estimates of controlling authority.

Alfred Tennyson pronounces Poe, "The literary glory of America," and declares that "no poet, certainly no modern poet, was so susceptible to the impressions of beauty as he."

Richard Henry Stoddard tells us that, "There is nothing in English literature with which the stories of Poe can be compared," and that "No modern poet except Tennyson is so subtly and strangely suggestive."

Mrs. Browning, fascinated and stirred by his power, exclaims, "This vivid writing! this power which is felt!"

James Russell Lowell's judgment (given in Poe's lifetime) is that "It would be hard to find a living author who has displayed such varied power. As a critic he has shown so superior an ability that we cannot but hope to collect his essays and give them a durable form.

We could refer to many of his poems to prove that he is the possessor of a pure and original vein.

His tales and essays have equally shown him a master

in prose. He has that admirable something which men have agreed to call "genius."

From John Burroughs we learn that the keener appreciation in Europe of literature as a fine art is no doubt the main reason why Poe is looked upon over there as our most noteworthy poet. Poe certainly had a more consummate art than any other American singer."

According to Prof. W. Minot, "There are few English writers of this century whose fame is likely to be more enduring. The feelings to which he appeals are simple but universal and he appeals to them with a force that has never been surpassed."

In the opinion of the *London Spectator*, "Poe stands as much alone among prose writers as Salvator Rosa among painters."

A. Conan Doyle acknowledges him as "the inventor and pioneer whom he has humbly followed," and the readers of Gaborieau will find in his writings the strong incense of the deep worship which shows itself in imitation.

Discussing this Centennial celebration of his birth, the gifted editor of the *Outlook* declares him to be one of the three foremost figures in American literature.

Hamilton Wright Mabie gives it as "his deliberate judgment that distinctively and in a unique sense he is the artist in our literature. His work holds first place."

John Greenleaf Whittier tells us, "The extraordinary genius of Edgar Poe is now acknowledged the world over."

And from George E. Woodberry we learn that, "On the roll of our literature Poe's name is inscribed with the

few foremost, and in the world at large his genius is established as valid among all men."

But why multiply the estimates of authorized exponents of literary supremacy, or reproduce the eulogiums of the recognized arbiters of literary preëminence?

The simple fact that in England and America his works in verse and prose are now by common consent amongst the highest and best of our classics, and that the literature of every tongue in Europe has been enriched by translations of his acknowledged master-pieces tells with conclusive force the story of his preëminence and fully accounts for the deep and permanent hold which his genius has taken upon the civilized world.

Cultivated and uncultivated alike feel and acknowledge its irresistible influence.

He enjoys the unique distinction to which very few writers can justly lay claim, of being supremely great in poetry and prose alike.

In this phenomenal particular he stands side by side with Milton, the ter-centennary of whose birth has recently been celebrated with such imposing ceremonies.

And there is, too, a sad similarity in the pecuniary rewards of their immortal work.

For his *Paradise Lost* Milton is said to have received the amazingly munificent price of five pounds, while for *The Raven* a reluctant purchaser was found willing to risk on it the extravagant sum of ten dollars.

Here, at home, it is a source of gratification that a just pride in what he so superbly and so successfully did for American literature has been aroused, bent on making his works more and more familiar to all classes of our people.

Apart from the striking power they display they are worthy of all this awakened interest as rare models of perfect purity of thought as well as of expression and style.

Indeed, one of his best claims to admiration is that nowhere in his writings can be found an impure line and this eloquent and significant fact should go far to convince those who may still have a lingering doubt as to his general rectitude that the harsh strictures upon his character, malevolently promulgated by Griswold are cruelly untrue.

The stern exigencies of his situation compelled Poe to write for his daily bread, but his spirit chafed under this dire necessity so injurious to the perfect manifestation of his best and loftiest powers.

The leaden weights of earth stayed many a majestic flight of his genius into the aërial realms of purest phantasy, but perpetually tempted and tortured as he was, he maintained with unshaken loyalty his allegiance to his lofty conceptions of the truth and never bartered the independent judgments of his royal intellect for profit or applause.

He was intensely eager to acquire high distinction in what he called, "the widest and noblest field of human ambition."

To his friend, Mrs. Gove-Nichols, he said, "I love fame! Fame! Glory! They are life-giving breath and living blood. No man lives unless he is famous!"

A large measure of what he so keenly coveted came to him in his life-time, but without its substantial fruits, and since his death atonement has been made and will continue to be made without ceasing for the unfortunate neglect of his own day and generation.

As the clouds of his last days were gathering around him I can fancy I hear him murmuring:

> I twine
> My hopes of being remembered in my line
> With my land's language; if too fond and far
> These aspirations in their scope incline—
> If my fame should be as my fortunes are
> Of hasty growth and blight; and dull oblivion bar
> My name from out the temple where the dead
> Are honored by the nations—let it be—
> And light the laurels on a loftier head,
> And be the Spartan's epitaph on me,
> "Sparta hath many a worthier son than he."

The doors of our Metropolitan "Hall of Fame" are not yet wide enough to admit his sculptured image and there is no panel on its walls for the inscription of his name but he needs no such recognition of the supremacy of his genius, nor will "dull oblivion" bar him from the temple of literary glory where the whole world worships.

The stream of time which washes away the dissoluble fabrics of other poets flows on without harm to the adamant of Shakespeare, and so we believe that as the centuries come and go the name of Edgar Allan Poe will be uttered with steadily increasing admiration and praise by millions yet unborn as peer of the loftiest of

> The bards sublime
> Whose distant footsteps echo
> Through the corridors of time.

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF EDGAR ALLAN POE FROM THE TESTIMONY OF HIS FRIENDS.

MRS. JOHN C. WRENSHALL.

To draw attention to the character of Edgar Allan Poe through the testimony of those intimately associated with him at various periods of his tragic life, is the object of this sketch: and as his faults have been dwelt upon, misstated and magnified, so here his many warm friends, made and retained in both private and public relations, speak for him.

For the date and place of Poe's birth reference must be made to newspapers of the time. In the absence of town registers, of church books, or family records of births, deaths and marriages, press notices have of necessity come to be accepted as evidence of such events. This applies as pertinently to persons dwelling in their permanent homes as to the leaders of the Virginia Comedians, Mr. and Mrs. David Poe, who were playing at the Federal Street Theatre in Boston from 1806 to 1809.

According to notices in *The Boston Gazette*, Mrs. Poe appeared on November 28, 1808, as *Lydia* in "The Sixty-Third Letter"—a musical afterpiece. No further announcement is made until February 9, 1809, when, under the head of theatrical information, appears the

following paragraph: "We congratulate the frequenters of the theatre upon the recovery of Mrs Poe . . . . This charming little actress will make her appearance tomorrow night as *Rosamunda* in the popular play of 'Abaellino, The Great Bandit.'"

It is claimed that 2 Carvel Street is the house in which Poe was born, and it was, perhaps, here the young and beautiful mother painted the miniature of herself which ever remained Poe's dearest possession—on the back of which she wrote: "For my little son Edgar, who should ever love Boston, the place of his birth, and where his mother found her best and most sympathetic friends."

A few months after the birth of their second son, Edgar, David and Elizabeth Poe commenced their wanderings anew, playing in New York during the following winter. In the summer of 1810 they went South, the Richmond papers recording Mrs. Poe as then playing in that city, David still piping as Elizabeth sang and danced, till the play was played out for the poor comedian in Norfolk, where David Poe died in 1811.[1] Illness was now fast wearing Mrs. Poe's nearly exhausted strength, but her unconquerable will permitted not her giving up the struggle until December 11, when the *Enquirer* chronicled her death.

The eldest child had been sent some time previously to his grandfather, General Poe, in Baltimore, and the younger children, Edgar and Rosalie, were at once taken by Mr. Mackenzie, a well known citizen of Richmond, to his home, and his family adopted the baby girl. Mr. John Allan, a merchant of the same city, yielding reluc-

[1] James A. Harrison "The Life of Edgar Allan Poe," Virginia Edition.

tantly to the pleadings of Mrs. Allan, consented to take Edgar, not quite two years of age. The children were then baptized Edgar Allan and Rose Mackenzie.

In an effort to better his fortunes Mr. Allan went abroad in 1815, to establish a branch house of Ellis & Allan in England, where with his wife and Edgar he remained for five years.

That nothing was lost upon him of the historic memories and poetical associations of his surroundings at the school in the old Manor House, where the little boy was placed, is proved by the story which Poe thought "his best," "William Wilson," written nineteen years after he had passed for the last time through the "tall iron gates."

In 1820 the Allans returned to Richmond, taking their adopted son with them, where for some months they made their home with the family of Mr. Ellis, Mr. Allan's partner. In T. H. Ellis, the son of this household, Edgar found a friend, who in later years wrote of Poe: "He was very beautiful, yet brave and manly for one so young. No boy ever had a greater influence over me than he had. He was indeed, a leader among his playmates; but my admiration for him scarcely knew bounds. . . . . He taught me to swim, to shoot, to skate, to play bandy."

Another companion of Poe, also intimate with him in after years, was Creed Thomas, his deskmate at Burke's Academy, whom Dr. Harrison quotes as follows: "Poe was a quiet, peaceful youngster, and seldom got into a difficulty with his schoolmates. He was as plucky as any boy at school, however, and never permitted himself to be imposed upon."

Thomas was a member of the Thespian Society to

which Poe belonged, but to which Mr. Allan objected; he also belonged to the Junior Morgan Riflemen, in which Poe was a lieutenant. When Lafayette visited Richmond, this company was selected as his body-guard, and Ellis tells how he admired Poe as he kept guard when the old General held his reception in the autumn of 1824. During this time as a boy of fourteen, Poe wrote the imperishable lines *To Helen*, inspired by Mrs. Jane Stith Stanard, the mother of his most intimate friend.

In 1825, Mr. Allan, who had come into a legacy from his uncle, Mr. Gault, bought a handsome place, its attendant surroundings bringing the life of luxury which has been ascribed to Poe's childhood. Poe, now about sixteen, admired greatly a young girl, Sarah Elmira Royster. Of him she wrote later, "He was a gentleman in every sense of the word. He was one of the most fascinating and refined men I ever knew." Mr. Allan and Mr. Royster objected to the love affair, on the ground of the exceeding youth of both parties, and after Poe left for the University Mr. Royster intercepted his letters, and the young lady at seventeen married Mr. Shelton of Richmond.

On the fourteenth day of February, 1826, Poe matriculated at the University of Virginia, having just passed his seventeenth birthday. Under the new system of elective studies he entered the schools of Ancient and Modern Languages, and remained at the University until the close of the same year. His career was much as that of other students, he played cards, idled, and drank "peach and honey," but though in this year of 1826 students were censured, and so entered on the books of the University, Poe's name only appears when signing the

minutes of the Jefferson Society, of which he was the secretary. And again, when leaving one month before his eighteenth birthday, he carried with him all the honors it was possible for him to attain, as shown by the faculty minutes. "Distinctions" were the highest marks given at that time by the University, graduation belonged to a much later period and the marks received by Poe would later have entitled him to a diploma in Latin and French.

Among his friends during that year were T. G. Tucker, William M. Burwell, Upton Beale, Philip Slaughter, Philip St. George Ambler, John Willis and William Wertenbaker, the latter—librarian of the University for forty-three years—was in the same classes with Poe and wrote: "I am sure I will always tenderly cherish my recollections of Edgar Allan Poe." To Tucker and other friends gathered in his little room, No. 13, West Range, Poe read the early productions of his youth, and it is said that those who were so fortunate as to hear these impromptu readings never forgot them.[2]

Returning to Mr. Allan's home in Richmond was not an especially happy event for Poe, "the distinctions" not counterbalancing his offense in making debts at cards. These debts Poe insisted upon paying, but Mr. Allan refused to do so and Poe rashly left his home. In May, 1827, he enlisted in Boston in the United States Army under the name of Edward A. Perry.

A few weeks later a tiny book of forty pages, giving Poe's collected poems, appeared in Boston as: "Tamerlane and Other Poems. By a Bostonian. Boston: Cal-

[2] Harrison "The Life of Edgar Allan Poe," Virginia Edition.

vin F. S. Thomas, Printer." Only forty copies were issued, and a very few have survived. One copy sold at auction in New York, November, 1900, for $2050, and was immediately resold for $2550.

In the army Poe won the confidence and respect of his superiors, before he was discharged receiving the appointment of sergeant-major—an unusual promotion for one so young. Mrs. Allan, his adopted mother, dying in February, 1829, a furlough was applied for, and shortly afterward Poe returned to his home. The remarkable service rendered in the artillery together with his unblemished record pointed with no uncertainty to the propriety of his receiving an appointment to West Point. Mr. Allan, softened by the death of his wife, who was always tenderly attached to Poe, obtained Poe's discharge, which was received on April 15, 1829, with highly commendatory letters from his commanding officers, which are on file in the War Department, Washington.[3]

Again with Mr. Allan, their differences were somewhat effaced by the fine record of the young soldier, and happier relations were in a degree restored. Mr. Allan furthered Poe's inclination to enter West Point by using all the influence he possessed. He wrote to the Secretary of State, but the tone of the letters betray the lack of warm interest which might have been expected.

Early in 1829 the second edition of Poe's poems was published by Hatch and Dunning of Baltimore. The title page was as follows: "Al Aaraaf. Tamerlane and Minor Poems. By Edgar A. Poe. Baltimore: Hatch & Dunning. 1829." In the middle of the reverse side

[3] Woodberry: "Life of E. A. Poe." 1909.

of the title page is "Copyright secured. Matchett & Woods, Printers." "Tamerlane" had been entirely rewritten, and some of the minor poems together with "Al Aaraaf" had been singing themselves into words during the two years of artillery service.

Poe's acquaintance with John Neal, to whom he dedicated "Tamerlane" dates from his visit to Baltimore to arrange for this book, and the correspondence between them is published in Neal's paper, "The Yankee and Boston Literary Gazette." With it are two poems by Poe not hitherto found among his works, but which Dr. Harrison gives in the "Virginia Edition."

More than fifteen months elapsed after leaving the army before the commission for West Point was received, and in obtaining it as much influence was exerted by Poe's military record as by the letters which he secured from prominent Virginians. On July 1, 1830, Poe entered the Military Academy, and from the first stood high in his studies: third in French and seventeenth in mathematics in a class of eighty-seven, but in singular contradiction to his devotion to his duties while in the artillery, he neglected and disobeyed the regulations of West Point.

For this much dwelt upon episode in Poe's life, his dismissal from the Academy, the most that investigation elucidates is that he sought it, choosing no flagrant offense as a means of obtaining his release, but simply the omission of daily duties exacted by the severe discipline of the Academy. Circumstances had greatly changed for Poe since entering in July. Mr. Allan had married again, and Poe felt he would from henceforth be an outsider in the new family, with a penniless future except for the

inadequate army pay. Literature was appealing to him with strengthening force, and apparently undisturbed by the knowledge that official action would be taken upon his conduct, he completed arrangements for the third edition of his poems, dedicating it: "To the U. S. Corps of Cadets." The young men had largely subscribed to the book, and upon receiving it found ample opportunity for the exercise of their youthful powers of criticism. The tragic tone was not to their taste and aroused their amusement and ridicule, the impression then made lingering long with the readers. The volume was a considerable advance over the two that had preceded it, the development of Poe's critical taste being apparent in the re-writing and strengthening of the poems, eight of which may be largely ascribed to the latter half of 1829 and 1830. *A Paen*, written in his sorrow for the death of Mrs. Allan, belongs to the earlier part of this period.

According to the statement of his roommate, T. H. Gibson, Poe resigned and left the Academy in December anticipating the court martial to be called in January for all offenders. This was held January 28, when Poe was tried and dismissed for "disobedience to orders and absence from roll calls, guard duty, and class work," the sentence taking effect March 6, 1831.

Exactly three months later Poe wrote from Richmond to William Gwynn, Editor of the *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Advertizer*, asking for any employment that he could give, but this gentleman was either not able, or did not choose to furnish it. In this letter there is total absence of any word of complaint because of Mr. Allan's withdrawal of protection, further than stating the facts.

Little is known of Poe's surroundings through the next two years. *Harper's* for March, 1899, brought to light some reminiscences of Augustus Van Cleef which shows Poe living in Baltimore during this time with his aunt, Mrs. Clemm, and tells of a transitory love affair between Poe and his "Mary," a fair Baltimore girl, with little Virginia, a child of ten, carrying notes to and fro. That he continued to write diligently in the poverty to which Mr. Allan had consigned him is proved by the material ready when, in 1833, *The Baltimore Saturday Visitor* opened its columns to the famous prize contest for poems and stories, in which Poe entered "The Tales of the Folio Club." One of these tales, "The Manuscript Found in a Bottle" was awarded the one hundred dollar prize with an accompanying recommendation "to publish all the tales in book form." Of the poems offered for the contest all were rejected but two; one, "The Coliseum," was in the same unmistakably beautiful handwriting as the story to which had been awarded the hundred dollar prize; the other poem was excellent and the fifty dollar prize was given to its author, John H. Hewitt, of Baltimore.

The judges, John P. Kennedy, John H. B. Latrobe, and James H. Miller, men of eminent literary ability, were enthusiastic in their encomiums of Poe's work, and Mr. Latrobe states; "I am not prepared to say that the committee may not have been biased in awarding the fifty dollar prize to Mr. Hewitt by the fact that they had already given the hundred dollar prize to Mr. Poe[4]. From this competition dates the friendship of Mr. Ken-

[4] Edgar Allan Poe Memorial Volume. By Sara S. Rice.

nedy for Poe, whom he introduced to Mr. White, editor and proprietor of *The Southern Literary Messenger*, of Richmond.

Mrs. Clemm was now living at No. 3 Amity Street and whatever Poe made went into their common fund of living. The city limits were near, and Poe with his friend L. A. Wilmer, editor of *The Saturday Visitor*, often taking Virginia with them, went for long walks in the country. The two men became fast friends and Wilmer gallantly defended Poe, when, in 1859, he published a book entitled "Our Press Gang, or The Crimes of the American Newpapers."

Mr. Allan died in Richmond on March 27, 1834. "Shortly before this event Poe called at his house, and being told by Mrs. Allan, who did not recognize him, that the physicians had forbidden her husband to see anyone, he thrust her aside and walked rapidly to Mr. Allan's chamber; on his entrance Mr. Allan raised his cane which he used to walk with, and, threatening to strike him if he came within his reach, ordered him out, a command that Poe at once obeyed.[5] This was the so-called violent scene in which the two parted. Mr. Allan left three children; his will cut off any lingering hopes of inheritance Poe may have indulged in and threw him irretrievably on his own resources.

Again in Baltimore, Poe with his friend Wilmer planned a literary journal whose utterances were to be untrammeled with opinions other than their own, the first note here sounded of Poe's wish for his own medium of expression, henceforth co-existent with his life. Nothing came

[5] Woodberry "Life of Edgar Allan Poe." 1909.

of their efforts, but some of Poe's stories found a market in Philadelphia while he worked for Wilmer and Mr. Kennedy; his connection with the *Messenger* meantime strengthening.

Three years in Baltimore had now gone by, during which Poe had made desperate efforts to maintain himself by his literary work. In their passing "the lovely violet eyed child of ten," Virginia, who Van Cleef wrote, "Even then loved her cousin to distraction," was growing into a more lovely young girl, and the records of Baltimore City show that a license was granted for her marriage to Poe, although search reveals no trace of the ceremony having been performed.

In March, 1835, in a letter to Mr. Kennedy, Poe seeks his influence in obtaining an appointment as teacher in a public school in Baltimore. Correspondence with Mr. White a few weeks later shows his continued active work for the *Messenger*, reference to these letters disproving the allegation that Poe never praised other authors.

In August, 1835, Poe in a letter, to his cousin William Poe, dated from Richmond, tells of having "lately obtained the editorship of the *Messenger*." The first mention of Poe's ill health is made at this time when he writes to Mr. Kennedy of "a depression of spirits which will ruin me should it long continue."

After leaving West Point, Poe had known hunger and want, and these doubtless undermined in youth the delicate constitution inherited from his parents. That yielding to the convivial habits of the day, when to decline to drink with companions was an insult, was not an established habit with Poe has been confirmed by many

in close contact with his daily life, though his physical weakness and exhaustion may have sometimes led to "the dangerous conditions" against which "Mr. White warns him."

The beginning of the next year finds Poe, Mrs. Clemm, and Virginia in Richmond, where, upon his salary of $520 a year increased by extra work to about $800, he had offered them a home. On May 16, 1836, Poe was married to Virginia by the Rev. Amasa Converse, a Presbyterian minister and editor of the *Southern Religious Telegraph*.[6]

Around the first first few months of their marriage some brightness hovers. Their income though small was certain, and confidence in his mental resources spurred Poe to incredible exertions. His work in the *Messenger* proves the man who coined this wealth from his brain guilty of no habitual excess excepting that of industry and entire disregard of his own mental and physical welfare. It was now that "Joseph Miller, Esq." made his bow in the opening chapters of "Autography," Poe's humor, never to be extinguished, bubbling to the top in these brilliant articles. Poe as editor of *The Southern Literary Messenger* raised the circulation from seven hundred to five thousand subscribers, an average of four articles from his pen appearing monthly— tales, essays, poems and alas! the fatal critiques that brought hosts of enemies to undermine him.

In the January number, 1837, Mr. White, the proprietor of the *Messenger* announced that "Mr. Poe, who has filled the Editorial Department with so much ability, retired from that station on the 3d instant. . . . .

[6] Harrison "The Life of Edgar Allan Poe." Virginia Edition.

Mr. Poe, however, will continue to furnish its columns from time to time, with the effusions of his vigorous and popular pen. It is perhaps due to Mr. Poe, to state that he is not responsible for any of the articles which appear in the present number, except the reviews of 'Byrant's Poems, 'George Balcomb,' 'Irving's Astoria, 'Reynold's Address on the South Sea Expedition" 'Anthon's Cicero,' the first number of 'Arthur Gordon Pym,' a sea story, and two poetical effusions to which his name is prefixed." It should be stated that fifteen additional columns of "Arthur Gordon Pym" appeared in the February number.

More lucrative employment was now accepted by Poe to collaborate with Dr. F. L. Hawkes in the management of the *New York Review*, Professors Anthon and Henry being co-editors with Dr. Hawkes. The Poes found shelter in New York in a very poor house, 113½ Carmine Street, where Mrs. Clemm took boarders. One of these, William Gowans, wrote of Poe: "For eight months or more 'one house contained us, as one table fed,' . . . I never saw him in the least affected with liquor, nor ever descend to any known vice, he was one of the most courteous, gentlemanly, and intelligent companions I have met with.[7]

In the Carmine Street house Poe finished "Arthur Gordon Pym," published in book form in July, 1838, and reprinted later in England. The hope that had led Poe to New York soon vanished, and in the autumn of 1838 the little family bade goodby to Carmine Street and Mr. Gowans, moving to Philadelphia, where they lived for

[7] Ingram "Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe."

six years—the happiest time of Poe's life. They took a small house in a remote part of the city, Spring Garden, and in its poor, but sweet simplicity seemed to have made it a model of a poet's home. Even Griswold, whose cherished resentment for Poe's criticism of his poetry was evidenced in every misrepresentation of malice of the dead and defenseless man, could not deny the beauty and the love in the home in Spring Garden.

Virginia's ineffable sweetness is again and again mentioned as winning all hearts; she delighted in the visits of young people and children and always had some little gifts for the latter. Two such souvenirs have recently been shown the writer. One a small perfume bottle, the other, a toy goblet, classic in shape as if modeled after some ancient Greek design.

T. C. Clarke, first editor of *The Saturday Evening Post*, gives, perhaps, the most charming picture of this home, in the reminiscences of the friendship between Virginia and his little daughter who "was fond of spending the day with her favorite friend and 'enlivened' the hours with her childish songs. There was one of which she hinted knowledge but positively refused to sing, and it was not until after repeated solicitations from Virginia that the child ventured upon 'I never would be married. and be called Mistress Poe, Goody Poe.' 'Mistress Poe' received the song with peal on peal of laughter, and insisted in her exhuberance of spirits on having the homely melody repeated. Upon parting Virginia gave the child a keepsake, which the recipient no longer a child now cherishes in memory of the fair and gentle donor,"[8]

[8] R. H. Stoddard.

In business as in personal relations, Poe made many friends in Philadelphia. In a letter received by the writer in March, 1909, mention is made of Robert Dybale of that city, "an ardent admirer of Poe's, who even in his darkest days would never permit anyone to speak slightingly of him, or his reputed habits. At the time of Poe's residence in this city, Mr. Dybale was connected with the editorial staff of *The Press*, then learning to appreciate his genius and brilliant mind. Poe would come into the office and perch himself on the table, unroll his manuscript, and read his articles to the staff. These were never submitted for inspection before being sent to the printer, inasmuch that they were written in a faultless manner. Poe always wrote on strips of paper about six inches wide, which as the MS. progressed were rolled up, and another strip pasted on." The writer of the letter, Mrs. Robert B. Keesey, of Philadelphia, adds: "We can readily see how fortunate it was for the 'reader' that his services were not needed, for I doubt if he could have unrolled and rolled as Poe did."

In 1838–1839, many new stories from Poe appeared. *The American Museum of Baltimore* gave "Ligeia" to the public, also "Signora Zenobia," "Scythe of Time," "A Predicament," and the weird glory of "The Haunted Palace;" and Miss Eliza Leslie's *Annual* boasted "William Wilson." In July, 1839, William E. Burton, proprietor of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, associated Poe with him in its editing. "The Fall of the House of Usher" soon appeared in this magazine, followed by "The Conversations of Eiros and Charmion" (or "The Rainbow and the Dove") the latter characterized by powers of speculation that hold the reader enthralled.

For a full explanation of circumstances attending the publication of the *Manual of Conchology* the reader is referred to Harrison's "Edgar Allan Poe," Virginia Edition, p. 146. It suffices here to say that the work was exploited by Professor Wyatt, Professor MacMurtree and Poe. Wyatt wished to get out a popular and inexpensive edition to pay for loss on a costly work that would not sell; with this in view he engaged Poe to issue the former under his own name. Wyatt was far more responsible than Poe for non-acknowledgment of Captain Thomas Brown's "Conchologist's Text Book," published in Glasgow in 1837, from which the first twenty pages were drawn. Poe, too, was undoubtedly in the wrong, but Wyatt, selling the book, seems to have escaped the censure that fell upon the unfortunate young man who with superhuman efforts was eking out in any direction offering his weekly salary of ten dollars; this regular amount just in view after a time of dependence on returns from contributions to magazines.

In this same year Poe's "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque," were published in two volumes, and dedicated to Col. William Drayton, of Philadelphia, "With every Sentiment of Respect, Gratitude, and Esteem, by his obliged Friend and Servant, the Author."

The relations between Burton and Poe had never been agreeable, they quarreled incessantly, one cause of disagreement, being Poe's unyielding wish and efforts for a magazine of his own, which had progressed as far as the prospectus issued in 1840, signed by Clarke and Poe. The name of the new magazine was to be the *Penn Monthly*, and Felix O. C. Darley was to furnish original designs for its illustrations.

Despite their bickerings, Burton was sufficiently interested in Poe to request that his young editor should be retained when the *Gentleman's Magazine* was bought by Mr. Graham and merged with *The Casket,* the two forming *Graham's Magazine.* Poe became the editor of the new publication and Mr. Graham ever remained his devoted friend.

Poe's cryptographic challenge sent out in *Alexander's Weekly Messenger* of Philadelphia had brought innumerable responses. Over these he had worked with inexhaustable patience answering almost undecipherable tests, many languages often being combined in one cryptograph. This unique exhibition of his singular powers was closed by an article from his pen whch appeared in *Graham's* in July, 1841. His extraordinary faculty of reasoning from another's mental standpoint still further aroused universal astonishment when, in *The Saturday Evening Post,* of May, 1841, he announced a prospective notice of "Barnaby Rudge." The initial chapters of the story had just appeared, from them Poe deduced the entire plot, and correctly presented its culmination. The character of this work, without the vast amount otherwise accomplished, silently corroborates statements of Poe's entire abstinence through these years.

Graham's Magazine achieved a wonderful success under its star leader, the subscriptions increasing from five to thirty-seven thousand. In April of 1841 "The Murders in the rue Morgue" appeared in *Graham's* inaugurating a school to which many great writers have acknowledged their indebtedness. The latest of these tributes was rendered by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at the Poe Centenary

celebration by the Authors' Club of London, March 1, 1909, when he credited the inspiration for his own detective stories to Edgar Allan Poe.

While Poe was working for Graham, he was contributing to *The Saturday Evening Post*, *The Lady's Companion*, *The Saturday Museum*, *The United States Post*, *The Dollar Newspaper*, and other publications. All of his work was clear cut and shaped to its pre-determined scheme; no detail spared, no superfluous word written. The relation not only between thoughts and words, but between words themselves was so perfectly adjusted that each caught lustre from the other, until prose and poetry alike shown as jewels against the onyx background of his sombre fancy.

With Poe's creative and critical powers going at telegraphic speed, Virginia's life was at lowest ebb, and though he worked and starved it was impossible to meet the demands of her illness. His business letters show his desperate struggles with consuming poverty, though not for his own needs. "He seems to have had no personal expenses," writes Mr. Graham. "What he received from me went directly into the hands of his mother-in-law for family comforts." When Poe's letters bore on his money obligations, anxiety to square his accounts was always first. Withal, that his generous nature was not warped is revealed in a letter written by him to James Russell Lowell, in which Poe forgives Lowell his debt and endeavors to encourage and cheer him in his struggle in Boston to maintain *The Pioneer*.

Poe's efforts for his own magazine again come to light in the *Philadelphia Saturday Museum* of March 4, 1843,

in the prospectus of *The Stylus* to appear in July, edited in connection with T. C. Clarke, and illustrated by Darley. A month after the prospectus was published, Poe's editorial connection with *Graham's Magazine* was severed, no explanation being given of the altered relations until 1873, when in conversation with Dr. Harrison, Mr. Graham made the following statement: "Poe never quarreled with him; never was discharged from *Graham's Magazine*" and the "facts of Mr. Poe's secession from Graham were as follows . . . . Mr. Poe was from illness or other causes, absent for a short time from his post on the magazine, a temporary arrangement made with Dr. Griswold to act as Poe's substitute until his return. Poe came back unexpectedly, and, seeing Griswold in his chair, turned on his heel without a word, and left the office, nor could he be persuaded to enter it again, although he sent frequent contributions to the pages of the magazine." Dr. Harrison adds "according to Gill, Griswold himself, was shortly afterwards dismissed by Mr. Graham from the editorship of the magazine for writing a scurrilous anonymous attack on Mr. Charles J. Peterson, a gentleman prominently connected with many American magazines, who was associated with Griswold in the same office apparently on the friendliest terms."

"The Gold Bug" written for *Graham's* but not yet published, was returned to Poe, in accordance with his earnest request; he entered it for a competitive prize and won the one hundred dollars offered by the Philadelphia *Dollar Magazine.* This was followed in August of the same year, 1843, by "The Black Cat" which appeared in *The Saturday Post.*

The great amount of work published through 1844 evidences Poe's unrelaxed efforts after leaving Graham, but poor pay, the uncertainty of daily bread, delays and disappointments in deferred publication, the over-speeding of his sensitive brain, the alternations of hope and dispair in the exceeding and prolonged illness of Virginia, brought bitter suffering to the three. The shadows hung heavily, close and dark about the little home in Spring Garden. It was decided to return to New York—the wider field. Virginia temporarily revived and Poe took her with him there. His letter to Mrs. Clemm written immediately after their arrival shows in every word the tender affection, trust and confidence uniting these three poor strugglers with fate.

A very few days after Poe reached New York his "Balloon Hoax" appeared in the *New York Sun*, and like others of his stories was taken as a fact in the United States, England and France. Stories, reviews and criticisms followed in quick succession in *Graham's*, *Godey's*, *The Columbian Magazine*, *The Evening Mirror*, *The Southern Literary Messenger*, and *The Democratic Review*. A position on the staff of *The Evening Mirror* being offered by its editor, N. P. Willis, was accepted by Poe and filled with the same industry and devotion to the interests of his employers as had characterized all his previous engagements.

The association between Poe and Willis was always harmonious, of it Willis wrote, "In our harassing days of daily editorship Poe for a long time was our assistant . . . . we loved the man for the entireness of fidelity with which he served us. When he left us we

were very reluctant to part with him. . . . . With the prospect of taking the lead in another periodical, he, at last, voluntarily gave up his employment with us."[9]

It was *The Evening Mirror* that gave the public the great literary excitement of the day by the publication of "The Raven" on January 19th, 1845. It was copied by permission from the advanced sheets of *The American Whig Review* and heralded by Willis as "the most effective single example of 'fugitive poetry' ever published in this country; and unsurpassed in English poetry for subtle conception, masterly ingenuity of versification, and consistant sustaining of imaginative lift." "The Raven" appeared again in the February number of *The Review*, in *The Broadway Journal*, and *The Southern Literary Messenger*; variants in each version. Numerous accounts exist as to the place and time of its composition, but for the most probable one reference must be made to Dr. Harrison's "Virginia Edition" of "Edgar Allan Poe," where General James R. O'Beirne is quoted as follows: "Edgar Allan Poe spent the summers of 1843 and 1844 at the homestead of my father-in-law. I have frequently heard the story from my wife's lips, who was about ten years old when she became acquainted with the great poet. In those days, more than half a century ago, Patrick Brennan (Mrs. O'Beirne's father) owned a farm of 216 acres extending from a point about 200 feet west of Central Park to the Hudson river. It was a picturesque spot, and the neighboring territory was considered a sort of summer resort whither a number of persons migrated in hot weather."

The house was a two story building, low to the ground,

[9] N. P. Willis: "Memoir Edgar Allan Poe."

without porch, piazza or any ornamentation, and was near what is now 84th Street and Broadway. General O'Beirne gives a description of the "big room" where "above the door opening into the hallway, stood "the pallid bust of Pallas." "It was a little plaster cast, and occupied a shelf nailed to the door casing immediately behind the bust, and occupying the space between the top casing and the ceiling; a number of little panes of smoky glass took the place of the partition." Mrs. Brennan, to whom Poe read "The Raven" before its publication, denied positively all charges of dissipation against him, and Mrs. O'Beirne recalls how she used to lie on the floor at Poe's feet arranging his manuscript and always carefully reversing it from the way he preferred to have it, placing it with the written side toward the floor.

Poe's engagement with *The Broadway Journal*, the paper to which Mr. Willis alluded, began with the opening of 1845. Many of the tales and poems revised and published together with a large number of reviews and criticisms appeared in the *Journal*, and the charges of plagiarism against Longfellow and his friends, opened in *The Evening Mirror* January 14th, were continued. This most unfortunate, unnecessary and enduring controversy aroused bitter resentment against Poe.

Of himself at this time, Poe writes to Dr. Creed Thomas "For the last three or four months I have been working fourteen or fifteen hours a day, hard at it all the time . . . . . and yet, Thomas, I have made no money, I am as poor now as ever I was in my life . . . . except in hope, which is by no means bankable." Wiley & Putnam were now issuing two volumes of Poe's works—the first,

twelve tales: the second, "The Raven and Other Poems." The latter volume was dedicated: "To the Noblest of Her Sex—To the Author of 'The Drama of Exile'—To Miss Elizabeth Barrett Barrett, of England, I Dedicate this volume, with the most Enthusiastic Admiration, and with the most Sincere Esteem.—E. A. P."

In July, Charles Fenno Hoffman wrote to Griswold: "*The Broadway Journal* stopped for a week to let Briggs step ashore with his luggage, and they are now getting up steam to drive it ahead under Captains Poe and Watson." In October Poe bought Bisco's interest for $50. At last he had a magazine of his own. There was though but a slim chance that he could maintain it; this he took and fought as he always did, gallantly, to the end. The subscriptions increased, success seemed within touch, but he could not meet the necessary expenses. He wrote to Griswold, Kennedy, Duyckink and his cousin George Poe asking for help; he offered to take a large discount for money owing him, but all of no avail. Failing to keep his poor raft afloat, he nailed his colors to the masthead, and on December 26th, 1845, announced the demise of *The Broadway Journal* and his farewell as editor "as cordially to foes as to friends."

In *Godey's Lady's Book* of May, 1846, appeared the author's introduction of "The Literati of New York City. Some Honest Opinions at random respecting their Autorial Merits, with Occasional Words of Personality." For the special opportunities enabling him to write of those so classed we must turn to his surroundings since his arrival in New York. That city was then justly celebrated for the brilliant evening re-unions held in the homes of dis-

tinguished men and women who delighted in drawing about them the littérateurs of the day. Poe was the centre of these circles, his charm of manner and rare conversational powers winning general admiration. Mrs. Whitman through letters from New York friends gives charming pictures of him in these salons. One writes: "To hear him repeat 'The Raven' which he does very quietly, is an event in one's life. . . . . His smile is captivating!"

Poe's fame was now assured. In France public attention was first directed to his stories through a controversy between rival journals as to the authorship of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." The plagiarism of the newspapers being exposed, and Poe acknowledged as the writer. "his best tales were translated by Mme. Isabelle Mennier."[10] From all this he received only the acclamations of those who became the members of his school, among them notably Gauthier and Baudelaire. In England his mesmeric studies excited profound interest. "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" was published in pamphlet form by Short & Co., of London, 1846, under the title of "Mesmerism in Articulo Mortis," accompanied by press notices showing that it was accepted as a statement of events actually occurring.

"The Literati" naturally aroused some resentment, but no expression of this was voiced until Thomas Dunn Brown (English) was filled with so deep a sense of injury that he published a venomous and libelous reply. Poe sued him for defamation of character and received a verdict of damages of $225. In the spring of 1846, while the

[10] Eugene L. Didier: "The Poe Cult." 1909.

cherry trees were still in bloom, the Poes moved from the city to the tiny cottage close to King's Bridge road, on Fordham Hill. Here they found some happy hours. Mrs. Clemm's care was over all, Virginia made wonderful results in artistic effects with their poor little household belongings, the devoted husband by his own efforts surrounded their tiny cottage with the flowers he loved and with birds, free and caged, to which with other pets he was ever gentle and kind. Alas! it soon became evident that Virginia was dying. With the passing summer dire want hemmed in the young wife, the uncomplaining striving mother, and the hard working, frantic husband, who for many weeks was too ill to write or even to leave the house.[11] Hope had almost turned away her face, yet love survived as witnessed by the tender letter from Poe to Virginia when he was unexpectedly detained in New York.

The autumn added cold to sufferings at Fordham. A kind friend, Mrs. Gove-Nichols, together with Mrs. Shew, Mrs. Hewitt and others, somewhat alleviated their need. N. P. Willis heard of the desperate conditions met and endured with such fortitude, and appealed to the public in their favor. Poe replied thanking Willis "for his kind and manly comments in the *Home Journal*," acknowledges his wants and privations, but waived the assistance that his pride so bitterly resented.

The old year passed out and the new one found Virginia still living. On the 29th of January, 1847, Poe wrote to Mrs. Shew "My poor Virginia yet lives . . . . May God grant her life until she sees you and thanks

[11] The Century Magazine February, 1903.

you once again . . . . Lest she may never see you more . . . . she bids me say that she sends you her sweetest kiss of love and will die blessing you. But come,—oh come tomorrow!" Upon that morrow the gentle creature entered into Paradise.

For months Poe was as one distraught, inspiration and incentive removed he was ill unto death, sleepless except when his "more than Mother" sat beside his bed, her hand upon his weary head in the tender communion of mutual loss. It was then his heart wrote the lines "To My Mother," which hold in crystal clear his love for the undaunted spirit of Maria Poe Clemm.

Through the year following Virginia's death Poe seldom left the cottage except to wander over the surrounding country, from Virginia's grave to the great arched acqueduct, to the rocky height of Mt. Tom from where he could gaze over the blue Hudson, and through the thick woods back to the little piazza, pacing to and fro in front of the door from which Virginia had been carried forth. He drank the lees of sorrow, but from their bitterness his spirit was strengthened to conceive his most exalted work "Eureka," the forecasting for eternity. Towards the close of the year "Ulalume" was written and first published in *The American Whig Review* for December. Of this poem Edmund Gosse has said: "The three lyrics which must be regarded as having the most permanent effect upon subsequent literature not in England merely, but in France, are 'Ulalume,' 'Annabel Lee,' and 'For Annie.'" The same writer advances Poe's first claim to commemoration being that "he restored to poetry a primitive faculty of which civilization seems successfully

to have deprived her . . . . as the discoverer and the founder of symbolism."[12]

The revived hope of a publication of his own, *The Stylus*, was again leading Poe, and to further this he gave "Eureka," as a lecture in New York. Though aided by his ever faithful friend, N. P. Willis, the effort was a failure; those who came to hear it listened spell-bound for three hours. "Poe appeared inspired, ... his eyes seemed to glow like those of his own 'Raven,'" but the audience consisted of sixty persons instead of the several hundred expected. "Eureka" was published by Putnam in 1848, the small edition of five hundred copies proving more than adequate for the demand.

In the summer of this year, while on a brief visit to Mrs. Shew, the first two stanzas of "The Bells" were written—"The silver bells" and "The heavy iron bells." Immediately after finishing them Poe fell into a deep sleep that lasted twelve hours, alarming his hostess, who called in a neighboring physician. He confirmed her opinion, formed from her own medical education, of the permanent injury to the brain with which Poe was suffering, and which would not permit him to use stimulants or tonics without producing insanity.

Poe's fateful love for Mrs. Whitman came like a meteor of destruction in this autumn of 1848, further unsettling the worn and nervous man. Mrs. Whitman in a letter to William F. Gill, of London, dated August, 1873, records: "No such scene as that described by Dr. Griswold ever transpired in my presence. No one, certainly,

[12] Edmund Gosse: The Contemporary Review. February, 1909.

no woman, who had the slightest acquaintance with Edgar Poe, could have credited the story for an instant. He was essentially, and instinctively a gentleman, utterly incapable, even in moments of excitement and delirium, of such an outrage as ascribed to him. No one acquainted with Edgar Poe could have given Dr. Griswold's scandalous anecdote a moment's credence."

Through 1848 Poe lectured in several of the northern cities on "The Poetic Principles." While at Lowell he made the acquaintance of the Richmonds, Mrs. Richmond, the "Annie." of these later years. In January 1849, Poe was at Fordham, writing from ten to four every day.[13] "Marginalia," begun in *The Democratic Review*, of November, 1844, and continued in *Graham's* and *Godey's*, began afresh in *The Messenger* for April, running through the summer.

In June Poe left New York for Richmond, going with Mrs. Clemm to spend the night before the journey under the roof of their devoted friend, Mrs. S. D. Lewis. Prescience that this was to be their last farewell was borne in upon the three who in deepest sadness said goodby. Poe himself was greatly dejected—this perhaps the forerunner of the desperate condition in which he reached Philadelphia, where he found his friend, John Sartain, the publisher. This gentleman kept Poe with him, guarding him with the kindest care, soothing and quieting his distress, until he recovered sufficiently to continue the journey to Richmond. The melancholy story as told by Mr. Sartain shows the encroachment of the brain lesion as diagnosed by Mrs. Shew, the consequences most

[13] Letter from Mrs. Clemm to "Annie." Harrison's "Virginia Edition."

pliable in grasping the momentary relief of drugs or stimulants. But from Mr. Sartain, and all others who ever saw him under these conditions in the closing years of his life, when practically a dying man, comes the not uncertain assertion that through the frenzy Poe never uttered an unclean word nor was possessed of an impure fancy; only brilliant imagery and glowing words depicting his ideal which never forsook nor betrayed him.

Poe's Richmond friends welcomed him with open arms. Mrs. Shelton's letters to Mrs. Clemm indicate the renewal of their engagement. At last he seemed to stand in the sunshine, even *The Stylus* was promised an assured existence. Before leaving Fordham, Poe had corresponded with E. H. N. Patterson, of Oquawka, Ill., for its publication and in August arrangements were consummated for it to appear simultaneously in St. Louis and New York on the first of the following July. In September Poe wrote to Mrs. Clemm in happy mood, he "had lectured in Norfolk, and cleared enough to settle my bill here at the Madison House and with two dollars over. Next Monday I lecture again here and expect to have a large audience, on Tuesday I start for Philadelphia to edit Mrs. Loud's poems and possibly on Thursday I start for New York. If I do I will go straight over to Mrs. Lewis' and send for you." The letter concluded with warm words of affection. Poe's purpose was to bring Mrs. Clemm back with him to Richmond and both were happy in the looked-for return. Upon the last days in Richmond Dr. Harrison throws new light in the hitherto unpublished statements of Bishop Fitzgerald and William Glenn of that city. These are given fully in the first volume of the

incomparable Virginia Edition of "Edgar Allan Poe," for which work all Poe students owe Dr. Harrison profound gratitude. Quoting Bishop Fitzgerald: "With a view to giving him pecuniary assistance in a delicate way, and an expression of the good will of the Richmond public toward him, Poe was invited to deliver a lecture on some topic to be chosen by himself. The tickets were placed at five dollars each, and at that price three hundred persons were packed into the Assembly Rooms of the Old Exchange Hotel. The lecture prepared for the occasion was on 'The Poetic Principle,' and it was read by him as it is now presented in his works. He was a charming reader, his manner the opposite of the elocutionary or sentimental—quiet, without gesture, with distinctness of utterance, nice shadings of accent, easy gracefulness, and that indefinable element that draws the hearer toward the speaker with increasing good will and pleasure. I am glad that I heard Poe read that lecture; its sentences on the printed page have for me an added charm from the recollection. The net proceeds of the lecture amounted to fifteen hundred dollars."

According to a letter[14] to Mrs. Clemm from Mrs. Shelton, Poe spent the last evening in Richmond with the latter. She writes, "he came to take leave of me. He was very sad and complained of being sick. I felt his pulse and found he had considerable fever, and did not think it probable he would be able to start the next morning (Thursday) as he anticipated. I felt so wretched about him all that night that I went up early the next

[14] Woodberry: "Life of Edgar Allan Poe."

morning to enquire after him, when much to my regret he had left in the boat for Baltimore."

Further accounts agree that on his walk back from Mrs. Shelton's he stopped at Dr. John Carter's office; and later "went to take a little supper across the street at Sadler's restaurant. There he met some acquaintances . . . . who accompanied him to the boat, where, as is said, they left him sober and cheerful." His last words to his friends were "He would soon be in Richmond again."

On October the 3d, 1849, Joseph W. Walker, a compositor on *The Sun*, Baltimore, wrote Dr. J. E. Snodgrass a note which Dr. Harrison copied from the original one in the possession of Mrs. Snodgrass:

BALTIMORE CITY, OCTOBER 3, 1849.

Dear Sir: There is a gentleman, rather the worse for wear, at Ryan's 4th Ward polls, who goes under the cognomen of Edgar A. Poe, and who appears in great distress, and he says he is acquainted with you, and I assure you he is in need of immediate assistance.

Yours in haste,

JOSEPH W. WALKER.

To Dr. J. E. Snodgrass.

Dr. Snodgrass on receipt of the note hastened to attend Poe and finding him in a dangerous state had him removed to the Washington College University Hospital. Poe was at first unconscious, then delirious, from which condition he sank into the quiet of exhaustion. In the gray dawn of Sunday morning, moving his head gently to and fro upon his pillow, he quietly said: "Lord help my poor soul," and died.

The Sun of October 8, 1849, announced: "We regret to learn that Edgar A. Poe, Esq., the distinguished American poet, scholar, and critic, died in this city yesterday morn-

ing, after an illness of four or five days. This announcement, coming so sudden and unexpected, will cause poignant regret among all who admire genius and have sympathies for the frailties too often attending it."

Many accounts from diverse standpoints have been written of the tragic end of Edgar Allan Poe. The evidence given by Bishop Fitzgerald strongly supports the belief that Poe was a victim of robbery and of "cooping" for political purposes—this being a common practice in Baltimore at that day—a view sustained not only by the impossibility of locating his whereabouts from Friday, September 28, to October 3, but the handsome clothing which he wore when leaving Richmond had been changed for poor and dirty garments. Testimony confirming this is given in the letter from William J. Glenn of Richmond. Mr. Glenn was Poe's fellow member in the "Sons of Temperance" and administered the obligations of total abstinence when admitting him early in July of 1849. He states: "During his stay in the city of the next three months or more there was not the slightest intimation that he had failed to live up to his obligation. In October he started to Baltimore . . . . a few days later we heard of his death at a hospital in that city, and the statement was made and too busily circulated that his death was the result of a spree commenced as soon as he reached Baltimore. We of the temperance order to which he belonged exerted ourselves to get at the facts, and concensus of opinion was that he had not been drinking, but had been drugged. A gentleman of the name of Benson, ... went to Baltimore, and as he knew Poe and felt much interest in the manner of his death, went

to the hospital at which he died, and had a talk with the doctor (J. J. Moran) who told him that Poe had not been drinking when brought to the hospital but was under the influence of a drug; he added that he suggested the use of stimulants, but that Mr. Poe positively declined taking any. Mr. Poe lived very quietly while here."

After his tired soul was at rest, Poe's magic voice still spoke in the sweetest of love ballads. *Annabel Lee*, which appeared in the *New York Tribune* October 9, 1849—the very day when his funeral cortege of six gentlemen followed him through the chill rain to his grave in the family lot at Westminster Burying Ground. In the same issue of the paper was the vindictive article by Rufus Griswold, signed "Ludwig." A month after Poe's death, the third and final version of "The Bells" was published in the November number of *The Union Magazine*, its development traced by the editor, John Sartain. A year later, October, 1850, "The Poetic Principle" appeared in the same magazine. The loveliest dream of a poet's home, "Landor's Cottage," was not given to the world until much later.

The mystery surrounding Poe's last days is long in finding solution. With his faults acknowledged by his friends, the extenuating conditions of his physical organization, heredity and disease reluctantly admitted by his enemies, prejudice sprung from malice and wilful turning from truth must disappear. All who possess the divine element of pity will unite in feeling that his sufferings were his expiation, an expiation not only in life but after death in the untruthful representations of his life and character.

Great as this has been, it has not robbed the world of

the legacy he bequeathed to literature, nor has it stilled the voices that, as one, acclaim his many fine qualities; lauding his devotion to his nearest ties and to his friends, his undaunted efforts to maintain his wife and mother when ill in body and enduring the most wearing of all pain—hope deferred, his honest and proper pride, disdaining to reproach when reproach was justifiable, his well-nigh superhuman industry and patience, his courage that refrained from lamentation and, through all and over all, the purity of his life. As these voices speak truly, their words live, for, having caught the fine ear of justice with which the people of America ever listen, they are imperishable.

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